The Evangelistic Church

Frederick E. Taylor

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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THE EVANGELISTIC CHURCH

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By
FREDERICK EUGENE TAYLOR

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FOREWORD

The really helpful literature on evangelism is not large in extent. Some useful volumes have appeared, but there is room for another.

Many definitions of evangelism have been attempted. One of those which most appeals to me is, that it is the effort to lead individuals, in groups or one by one, to a surrender of their lives to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. Such surrender must inevitably bear fruit in an enlistment in a life of service to Christ and to the world, and in practical loyalty to the church of Christ. Any form of effort which will accomplish these ends may rightly be called successful evangelism. There is involved in this the wisest and most effective use of the present forces available, as represented in the present membership of the churches. The early church grew because allegiance to Christ meant active enlistment in the work of evan-

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gelization. The disciple who found Christ was expected to find his friend and bring him to Christ. "And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved."

Our churches today have more complete organization, vastly better equipment, much larger resources, greater intelligence, and broader information, than ever before. And yet there is wide-spread acknowledgment that results are unsatisfactory. The members of our churches have not taken the situation into sufficiently serious consideration. A considerable proportion of the membership of a typical church seem to hold that their full duty has been done if with fair regularity they attend the morning service of the church, and make some contribution to the funds for current expenses and beneficence. To state these facts, either in criticism or in regret, will not alter the conditions. There is no easy way to accomplish results in this vital field, whatever be the

character of the church or of the community. True, there is a qualitative aspect to the work of the local church, but we must not overlook the fact that if churches cease to grow numerically, it is almost indisputable evidence that such churches have lost the spirit without which they will shrivel and die.

I am glad that Dr. Frederick E. Taylor has been asked to make a contribution to the literature of evangelism, and that the publishers requested that the work be in some part a record of his own experience in the evangelistic field. Both as a vocational evangelist in his early ministry and from time to time during the later years, as well as by a splendid exemplification of pulpit and pastoral evangelism in the churches which he has served as pastor, he is qualified to speak as very few men can speak. His own record is his best credential.

Doctor Taylor has the confidence of Christian people to an unusual degree. He is

honored and loved by his brethren in the ministry. He is recognized as a sane and potent force in all which relates to the welfare of the city into which for a score of years he has poured his life. To him has come the greatest testimonial of confidence which the Baptists of the North can render to him, in his election to the presidency of the Northern Baptist Convention. In the vigor of his great manhood, and in the very flood-tide of his usefulness, there comes to us this volume from his mind and his heart. It will find a wide welcome, and it will stimulate many to a new dedication rightly to do their own part in the outreach of the gospel of our Lord.

CLARENCE A. BARBOUR.

THE ROCHESTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

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I

THE LOST WORD

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.

—John 9: 4.

THE LOST WORD

It seems to me that we have lost a word out of our Christian vocabulary. I used to hear it occasionally in the ministers' meetings twenty-five years ago. It would sometimes be used in the prayer-meeting, but of recent years I have not heard it. It is the word "concern." When it was used it always meant concern for souls or a concern over the coldness of the church. If a pastor arose in the ministers' meeting and said, "My people are getting concerned about souls," we knew the church was on the verge of a revival. If the pastor and his officers were concerned about the cold condition of the church, it would not be long until that church would become interested in the salvation of the lost.

But, we do not hear that word in these days, and what is more to the point, we do not find many of our churches very zealous in the work of evangelism. Why this condition obtains, I am not able to say; some would say it is because of the theological controversy which has raged for the past

ten years. In any case, I do not believe that that controversy has stimulated the spirit of evangelism. On the contrary, we may become so concerned about winning a debate that we lose all concern for souls. Indeed, one of the leading ministers of this country, after giving a good deal of time as a leader on one side of the controversy went before a congregation of about five thousand people at a convention and said that he had found that his own soul was being withered, that he was becoming harsh and ungenerous in spirit and was losing the evangelistic note out of his ministry. He had decided it did not pay. He wanted to be free from the spirit of controversy that he might be filled with the spirit of evangelism which is the spirit of love. But, whether this theological controversy is to blame or not, certain it is that the spirit of concern is not so dominant in our churches today as it used to be twenty-five years ago.

If the church is to continue to make an impression upon the world, it must come back to the place where in every department there is a genuine spirit of concern for the salvation of those who are lost.

This spirit of concern was the spirit of Jesus and became the spirit of the early church. The one thing that nearly broke the heart of our Lord was the spirit of indifference of his day. He went steadily and boldly forward with the program of redemption and never faltered in the journey to the cross; but when he saw the indifference of the people of the church of his day, when he saw there was so much to be done and so little time in which to do it, he seems to have been filled with the spirit of intense passion to work. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." "Arising a great while before day, he prayed." "He went alone into the mountain and prayed all night."

When the rich young man went away, Jesus was filled with sadness to see his invitation declined. When Jesus looked down on Jerusalem for the last time before going forth to suffer and die, he was filled with grief. The great head bowed, and he cried out, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that stonest the prophets and killest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gath-

ered thee as a hen would gather her brood, and ye would not." Jesus was terribly concerned for the souls of men. This same spirit seems to have filled the heart of the great apostle Paul. He toiled terribly for the salvation of the world. He was heart-broken over the indifference to his appeal. He could suffer without complaint imprisonment and scourging; he could be dragged out of town at the heels of horses and left for dead upon a Roman highway and then would struggle back to life and gladly preach the same truth to the people who had tried to kill him. But I suppose the thing that hurt him most in all of his work was the indifference of the people at Athens who calmly turned their backs on his appeal and went about their business. It was concern that drove him across Asia and finally to Rome to proclaim the gospel.

Listen to him as he pours out his heart in his concern for Israel, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved." "To the weak became I as

weak that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

One could not live long in the fellowship of Jesus or Paul without realizing that they had a concern for the souls of men, and I believe that when this spirit takes possession of us we shall see people awakened and saved.

Doctor Myer's picture of Paul as he stands up to preach is an indication of the passionate desire of the great apostle for the salvation of those whom he was addressing:

Oft when the Word is on me to deliver
  Lifts the illusion and the truth lies bare;
Desert or throng, the city or the river,
  Melts in a lucid Paradise of air—

Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,
  Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be
    kings—
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
  Sadly contented in a show of things:

Then with a rush the intolerable craving
  Shivers throughout me like a trumpet-call,
Oh to save these! to perish for their saving,
  Die for their life, be offered for them all!

In the second place, all ministers of the gospel should have this spirit of concern for the salvation of the lost. I do not see how any man can claim to be a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ and not have deep down in his heart a real spirit of concern for those who are still out of the kingdom of God, and I believe that a real minister of Jesus Christ will not be satisfied with the things that seem to indicate progress so long as people are not asking the way of life. He will not be satisfied because his congregation fills the house or pays the bills or even raises his salary. Down deep in his heart he will be restless, he will be discontented, he will feel that something is wrong; because he is a real minister of Christ he will hunger for souls. The cry of a penitent is like cold water to a thirsty soul in his life, and he will welcome the opportunity of leading souls to Jesus Christ. Indeed, if he is satisfied with the things I have mentioned and does not have a spirit of concern for souls, he is in danger.

I believe that the majority of the ministers of the gospel have that spirit. I have traveled across the country on many occa-

sions to speak to ministers' conferences and have found again and again that many of the pastors were passionately desirous of an awakened church.

A number of years ago I was invited to go to Philadelphia to take part in a series of meetings under the leadership of Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman. When I arrived there, I found that the church in which I was to preach was a very aristocratic organization, one of those churches where money comes easy and where the people are likely to be contented so long as the minister interests them by preaching good sermons. I was somewhat discouraged because I felt that if I was to leave my pastorate and do the work of an evangelist for a short time, I wanted to go where I could actually see things happen and have my own soul refreshed as well as make a contribution according to my ability to the work of the kingdom.

On the day that I arrived, I was called into conference by the pastor and we met in his study. I shall never forget the afternoon that I spent with that godly minister. He poured out his soul to me and told me

how he had hungered and thirsted for a revival of religion for a number of years. He said that he had been there for over ten years, but during the past few years the church had seemed to become barren and there did not seem to be any desire on the part of any one for the salvation of the lost. He said to me: "I have spent literally hours on my face before God asking God to search my soul. I have told him if there was anything in my life that was preventing the work of the spirit of God I wanted to have it revealed," and then with tears in his eyes, he said to me, "I tell you, Doctor Taylor, if I do not see a revival of religion in these days, I have told God that I cannot stay here any longer. I must resign this pastorate and go somewhere else."

When we arose from our knees after a season of prayer, I said to him, "I believe that you are going to see the desire of your heart, for I never knew a man to have concern as you have without seeing souls brought into the kingdom."

For nearly three weeks I had the privilege of preaching in that magnificent church, and I saw the people come down the aisles

night after night, sometimes sobbing their way into the kingdom of God. It was one of the most refreshing ministries I have ever known and I think it could all be traced to the hunger of heart of that Presbyterian pastor.

During the days of the war, it was my privilege to have charge of the religious work in all of the Y. M. C. A. camps in the Central Military District. One day during the bitter cold winter of 1918, I was holding a conference with the Y. M. C. A. secretaries and the chaplains in Camp Grant, where one of the leading pastors of Chicago was the religious-work director. For nearly an hour I had been speaking to the men about the necessity of reaching these soldier boys for Christ before they went overseas, and had said that unless we had come to the camps with the desire to reach the souls of these boys, it would have been better for us if we had never come.

Just as I was about to close the conference of the morning, this pastor said, "I would like to say a word"; then he told this story: "Last night, I came back after a hard day's work throughout the camp and

I was almost worn out because I had been hard at it all day long, from early in the morning and it was now about ten-thirty at night. I sat down and took off one of my puttees and sat there thinking for a moment about the affairs of the day, when suddenly there came into my mind this thought: 'Is there any boy in this camp tonight who knows any more about Jesus Christ than he knew this morning because you have been here all day?' And I found myself thinking over the work of the day. I had no reason to feel that I had not done my full duty because I had labored all day long in the various buildings, setting up meetings, in some cases conducting the meetings, and doing the work that I was supposed to do. I had come up there from my church hoping to make a contribution toward the salvation of these soldiers, and I realized then that I had not spoken to a single man all day long about his relationship to Jesus Christ. I couldn't go to sleep and so I put my puttee on again, got into my overcoat and helmet and went out into the night." And then he added, "You might be interested to know, fellows, that last

night, a little after midnight, one of the boys of this camp came to know Jesus Christ as his Saviour while we stood together out under the stars. I came back then and could go to sleep."

I believe that the spirit which that pastor revealed that night is the spirit which ought to be in the heart and life of every minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and when it is there, the church will be warm and spiritual and constantly seeing accessions.

I believe, again, that spirit ought to be found in the hearts and lives of those who are the leaders in our schools and colleges. More and more we are coming to see that any school which is worth while must produce scholarship plus something else; that an education which does not influence character is not worth what it costs. In the early days, educational institutions were founded by Christian men and women and Christianity was supposed to have a prominent place in the life of the school. The only reason for a denominational college or university is that a boy or girl may obtain an education in a Christian environment, and by that I mean that the prominent thing

of that institution will be an atmosphere permeated through and through with the spirit of Christianity.

Unfortunately, there are colleges where the president and faculty seem to think that a more or less perfunctory chapel service once a day or two or three times a week is enough to give that institution a Christian flavor. As long as the students behave themselves and give the faculty no trouble, the religious life of the institution is hardly thought of seriously, and it may be that hundreds of thousands of dollars have been poured out into that institution by Christian men and women whose sole thought in giving the money was that it should be used to develop Christian character in a Christian college.

I am convinced, after years of ministering to students in colleges and preparatory schools, as well as student conferences all over the country, that hundreds and even thousands of students could be won for Christ during the years they are in college if there was a real concern for souls in the lives of the leaders of our colleges. I am glad to say that my experience tells me that

there are college presidents and college professors who have that spirit and who show it in their contacts with the students.

Some years ago one of the leading colleges of the East invited a man from the Middle West to become its president—a man with whom I was very well acquainted. Within a few weeks of the time when he became president of this large university, he wrote to me saying, "I believe that the first thing that this university needs is a revival of religion," and he invited me to come there and hold meetings. It was impossible for me to leave my church at the time, so I had to decline his invitation, but he secured one of the most evangelistic pastors in our country and that institution was thrilled with his messages and students were saved and the whole atmosphere changed. One of his first acts in his new position was to develop the spiritual life of that great university. I believe that wherever there is a president of a university who has that spirit, it will reach down into the life of every man on the faculty and will reach the students and influence everybody on the campus.

Not very long ago, I was invited to deliver a commencement address at one of the leading preparatory schools in the East, and I was a guest in the home of the very much loved and successful head master of this great school. On the night before the commencement exercises were to be held, the head master and his wife, a young lady who used to be a student in the school, and myself were sitting together talking about educational life. During the conversation, the head master of the school said: " You might be interested to know that I have been here something over twenty-five years, and as the time drew near for my twenty-fifth anniversary, I sent out a letter to every alumnus of the institution whose address we could find. Of course, during that long term of years,I have seen a great many students go out of this institution and today they are scattered all over the world. In the letter I asked several questions, and one of the questions was this: ' What is the most fragrant memory that you have of the days when you were here in this school? ' Now I expected, of course, that the majority of the students would say something about the

friendships which they had made, or the victories they had won in athletics, or something about the general events of the school, but the most amazing thing was this: Over eighty-five per cent. of those students said that the most precious memory they had of the institution was the memory of the chapel exercises which they attended every morning."

That was a revelation to me and I expressed myself as being greatly surprised to think that that was the most important thing in the life of the institution at that time. The young lady who was there spoke up and said: "I would like to add my testimony. I was here many years ago when they allowed girls to come to what has now become a boys' school. I have been out in the world teaching in a university for a number of years; many times during my work I have become almost discouraged and have sometimes thought of giving it up, but in almost every instance when I got into a condition of that kind, the memory of something that had been said or done during the chapel exercises in this school would come back to me and I would find myself

encouraged and strengthened and enabled to go on."

It was a clear indication to me, in these days when the temptation, even in denominational schools, is to minimize the chapel exercises or to give them up entirely, that we have drifted far from the real spirit which actuated the lives of the great leaders in our schools of years ago. I am firmly convinced that the institution which has a president who has a real concern for the souls of his students will always have also a fine spirit of interest in Christian life and service throughout the whole school. If there is a lack of concern about the religious life of the students in any college that is supposed to be Christian, it is because the faculty is growing indifferent to religious life.

I have found in recent years that in some of our institutions it is the students themselves that have to take the lead in everything pertaining to religious life on the campus rather than having the leadership suggested by those who are on the faculty. Indeed, it is not unusual to have some Y. M. C. A. man or Y. W. C. A. girl come and

ask this question: "How can we get the president and the faculty interested in the religious life of the students?"

The first invitation that I ever had to conduct a series of evangelistic meetings in a university came to me from the young men of the Y. M. C. A. in the preparatory school and the college connected with the university. After I had been there for something over a week and the meetings had grown in interest and power and the day was nearing when I was to leave, the president gathered the faculty together and issued an invitation from the faculty to me asking me to stay for another week or two. The reason that I mention this is that it took the students to arouse the university faculty and president to a condition of interest enough to issue an invitation. All of the work began with the students themselves. We need to pray earnestly that those who are on the faculties of our schools and colleges may become more concerned for the religious life of the boys and girls entrusted to their care.

Again, I believe that the laymen of our churches need to be aroused to a desire to

see the spirit of evangelism dominant in the life of the church. More than once, I have seen a revival of religion that has moved an entire city begin in the life of a Christian layman. I was in a city in Pennsylvania some years ago where all of the Protestant churches in the community were in the movement, and I have rarely been in a community of its size where the spirit of salvation seemed to permeate the whole city as it did there. We had meetings morning, afternoon, and evening. We had midnight meetings in a theater, and the whole community was stirred from center to circumference by the power of the gospel of Christ. At a ministers' meeting held one morning when we were nearing the close of the campaign, I had been congratulating the ministers upon the wonderful success of the movement and intimating that, of course, they were to be commended for the spirit which had brought them together in this great work, when one of the ministers arose and said, "All of the credit for this great evangelistic campaign should be given not to any one or all of us ministers; but, on the contrary, to a layman who became so

tremendously concerned about the condition of the community that he was the one who in reality began the movement." I asked for the privilege of meeting this man, and the next day had him in my hotel to talk with him.

Very modestly, indeed, he told me the story of how he had given his heart to Jesus Christ in a little Methodist meeting about a year before; he had been so converted that it changed everything in his life and the only desire he had was to try to lead other men into the truth. He became tremendously concerned about the coldness of the churches in the community. He talked with some of the men in the community and did not seem to be able to awaken a response. He even talked to some of the ministers, and they did not become enthusiastic. Then he went to a friend, a layman, who was engaged in Christian work and poured out his soul to him; in him he found a kindred spirit and together they decided to pray earnestly that the community might be stirred by the fires of evangelism. They gathered a little group together and began to pray. Then they

went over to a ministers' meeting and told them the desire that was in their hearts, and that was the beginning of what was the greatest evangelistic movement that that community ever saw. It began in the heart of a layman who was concerned for the salvation of his fellow men, and I believe that more than one evangelistic movement has begun in the same way.

One night in a church in the City of Brooklyn at a social affair, I noticed one of the deacons standing behind a door that was partly closed, talking very earnestly to another man. I went by and thought nothing of it until one of these men came to me and said, "Did you see me talking to that man back of the door?" I answered, "Yes." "Well," he said, "I have wanted to have an opportunity to speak to that man about his soul for a long time and I was a little afraid that this was not just the right time when we were all enjoying a social evening together; but the Spirit of God seemed to say to me to speak to him, so in order that I might get him away from the group and not be interrupted, I took him behind that door and I think you

will be glad to know that he has just accepted Jesus Christ as his Saviour and will come into the church in a short time."

Here was a deacon so concerned for the souls of men that he could lead a fellow man to Christ during a social affair in the church. There are literally scores of splendid men in our churches who might be aroused to do this sort of work if we could only bring to them something of the concern for souls that Jesus Christ had.

A well-known Brooklyn pastor finished one of his Sunday-morning sermons with this remark: "Every person in this congregation this morning is either a channel of blessing through which the Spirit of God is reaching the lives of other men, or he is an obstacle in the way, preventing the Spirit of God from reaching the lives of other men." He had been speaking upon the subject of the Spirit of God and telling how the Spirit worked through individual lives. In the congregation that morning was a man who had been a member of the church for a good many years and had been on the Board of Trustees for perhaps twenty years. When he went home

that day, he found himself saying all the way home, "Am I a channel or an obstacle? Am I a channel or an obstacle?" After his dinner, he shut himself in the study and began to think over that matter and he had a soliloquy something like this: "According to what the pastor said this morning, every man is either a channel or an obstacle. I have been a member of the church for a good many years; I try to support it; I try to be loyal to my pastor; I believe I am a Christian man, but I have never spoken to another man about his soul in all my life. Am I a channel or an obstacle? I do not think I could speak to a man about his soul. I do not think I would know how." But as he talked it over with himself, he finally went down on his knees and promised God that if he would enable him to speak when he thought he ought to speak and give him the courage to do it, he would no longer be an obstacle but a channel.

The next morning, the first man in his private office was a young man who was his secretary, and after the usual business had been transacted and the young man was about to retire, he called to him and said:

"Wait a moment, Henry, I want to speak to you. Shut the door there, I don't want to be interrupted." So Henry shut the door and waited. Then said this great business man who had never spoken to a man about his soul in all of his life before: "Henry, I am a member of the church. I have been a Christian, I think, for a good many years. Are you a Christian?" "No sir, I am not," was the answer. "Well," he said, "Henry, I don't know so very much about it, but I want to ask you if you are not willing to become a Christian and go along with me in the Christian way?" And then he got the surprise of his life, for Henry said: "For about two years I have been waiting for some one to say just that to me. I have attended church and there have been times when I wanted to go down and speak to the pastor and ask him to tell me how to be a Christian, but I never had the nerve to do it. If you will tell me how to be a Christian, I will be glad to be one." And there in that business office that morning, with his arm over the shoulder of his own employee, that business man led him to Jesus Christ.

The second man in the office was the Irish Catholic porter, and the question immediately arose in this man's mind, "I wonder if I ought to speak to him?" Somehow he felt that he should, and so after the business had been transacted with the porter, he said to him, "Patrick, are you a Christian?" "Yes sir," said the Irishman, "I am a member of the Catholic church and I go to mass every Sunday." "Well, that is fine, Patrick," said his employer, "you keep on going. I am trying to be a Christian too, and we will both do well if we attend our church regularly." That was all he said. It was all that he felt called upon to say, but that Irish Catholic porter went out of that great business man's office that morning feeling that a new relationship existed between capital and labor, and I am quite sure if that relationship could be produced in the business life of our day, strikes would be almost impossible.

The pastor who told this story said that in the course of a year after he preached that sermon, twenty-one men, in some instances with their wives, united with his

church, every one of whom was led by the man who had never spoken to a man in all of his life before. He had to have a concern for souls and when he got that he had the pleasure of leading men into the truth.

I am quite sure, also, that this spirit is needed in our homes. One of the dangers of our day is that the generation of youth now coming on will never come to know very much about Christianity because many of them are drifting away from the church, and there is practically nothing in the home to indicate that it is necessary to be a Christian. I believe that when fathers and mothers get a real concern for their children many of the boys and girls who are in the homes of today will be reached and become active and interested in the work of the kingdom of God. Whenever a mother has the spirit of that Syro-Phœnician woman who came to Jesus with her heart bursting with desire to have her daughter healed and refused to be turned aside and, of course, was granted her request, I say, whenever the mothers of our day have concern for their children as

that woman had, there will not be heart-aches in the years to come because the children have not come to know Jesus Christ. Whenever the fathers of our day get the same spirit of the man who had the epileptic boy, I believe that the boys too of our day will be led to Jesus Christ.

One of my friends used to tell the story of a revival service that was being conducted in a community where the churches united and where the pastors of the various churches were conducting the services. One night one of the ministers would preach and at the close of his sermon, another one of the ministers would take up the invitation and urge the people to come forward and accept Christ as Saviour and Lord. On the night that my friend was there, the man who preached, preached a splendid sermon and one that stirred the hearts, lives, and consciences of the people. Then, an elderly minister, indeed a man quite far along in years, stood up and began to entreat the people to come forward, and they yielded to his entreaty and they came, until by and by all around the altar were gathered people who were seeking the way of life. Then

there came a lull and it seemed that every one had come who would come, but still the old minister, with an earnestness that was beyond anything which they had ever seen before, kept on pleading and saying, " Isn't there still another who will come? "

By and by it became embarrassing because no one else was coming, and then one of the ministers touched him on the elbow and said, " I think all have come whom we can expect tonight," but the old gentleman did not even turn around; he kept right on pleading, " Isn't there still another one who will come? " Then when it became so embarrassing that the ministers hardly knew what to do and the congregation was wondering how long he would continue, suddenly there arose in the back of the room a young man who started down the center aisle, and he no sooner started down the aisle than the old gentleman stopped, walked down off the platform, up the aisle, and put his arms around his own boy. As he did so, he was heard to say, " Oh, my boy, if you had not come I believe I would have died—I believe I would have died." Of course, the whole congregation was in tears

and it was a thrilling moment in that church, but, my friends, when a minister of the gospel has the spirit of concern that that man had, when a father has a spirit that enables him to say "I would have died if you hadn't come," I believe that a revival is imminent and that any community will be stirred to its depths because of the spirit which is in the hearts and lives and consciences of the people.

II

THE EVANGELISTIC CHURCH

Out of the heart are the issues of life.
—Prov. 4:23.

With the heart man believeth unto righteousness. *—Rom. 10:10.*

THE EVANGELISTIC CHURCH

To begin with, any other church would be a failure. The spirit of evangelism is the spirit of Jesus. The commission of Jesus to the church is one of evangelism. The church must either grow or go, and the only way for it to grow is to go. The early church was in grave danger when, in spite of the last words of our Lord, it settled down in Jerusalem and made no attempt to reach Judea. Persecution came and drove the disciples out with the message of the gospel.

Perhaps the gravest danger of the church in our day is for it to be satisfied to carry on and maintain services for those who enjoy good preaching and singing and are willing to pay the bills, but this means a dying church, a church without power and a church that will never make any impression on the world. The only possibility of saving our civilization from decay and ruin is in the evangelistic church. It cannot be saved by legislation, education, or reforma-

tion. All have been tried, and all have failed. None have power to change the heart, "and out of the heart are the issues of life." "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Nothing but the power of God can produce that condition, and the gospel is God's method of changing life.

The supreme business of the church is to reach the people who have never had an experience of divine grace. The church may receive a hundred people a year by letter, but in that case no impression has been made upon the great masses of unsaved people, and the church has not gained an inch in the battle against sin. The people of the church must realize that we are in a battle that must never cease until the victory against sin shall have been won, and the fellow workers with Christ can take upon their lips his triumphant cry, "It is finished."

'Tis not for man to trifle, life is brief
And sin is here,
Our age is but the falling of a leaf,
A dropping tear.
We have no time to sport away the hours,
All must be earnest in a world like ours.

Not many lives, but only one have we,
One, only one.
How earnest should that one life be,
That narrow span
Day after day spent in blessed toil,
Hour after hour still bringing in new spoil.

And, it is "new spoil" that counts in the battle for Christ. So, the church must be evangelistic, but there are differences of opinion as to what makes an evangelistic church.

What Is Meant by an Evangelistic Church?

By an evangelistic church I do not mean necessarily a church that has a meeting once a year. When I first came to the Middle West, I found preachers who would ask me this question: "When are you going to hold your meeting?" I discovered that nearly every preacher had an idea that he ought to hold a meeting once a year, and that if he did not do that, he was lacking in his work as a pastor. I believe it is perfectly possible to go through more than one year without holding an evangelistic meeting and yet maintain all that is meant by the evangelistic church. Nor do I believe

that an evangelistic church is necessarily a church where an invitation is given at every service to the unsaved. There are those who differ with me in this and think at the close of every service some invitation should be offered. In my own work, I sometimes go along for several weeks without extending an invitation at all and find that the very fact that an invitation is given at every meeting becomes so commonplace and stereotyped that it loses all the force of an appeal. On the other hand, if an invitation is given occasionally when it seems the right time, I believe that it produces better results. Again may I say that I do not believe that an evangelistic church is one that has a decision day once a year. I believe it is perfectly possible to have many decision days through the year, or it may be wise at times not to attempt anything in the way of a decision day.

My definition of an evangelistic church is a church which from pulpit to primary is permeated by a desire to see a constant inflow of people who have come to know Christ as Saviour and Lord, and who, in turn, are seeking to lead others to the same

experience. This may not be a perfect definition and it may not cover all of the ground, but it seems to me that this is at least a fair statement concerning an evangelistic church because, after all, it is not so much the particular methods that are put into operation that make an evangelistic church but rather a spirit which permeates all of the work in all of the departments, thus creating an atmosphere in which evangelism becomes perpectly natural. It is not a man-made affair nor is it something that is worked up or some condition created for a short period, but rather a normal condition or atmosphere so that the winning of souls comes as naturally as the harvest of the physical world and with no more noise or excitement than the incoming of the tide.

Now, of course, we naturally want to know how that atmosphere can be created, and in the first place, I believe that the spirit of evangelism must be dominant in the life of the pastor or it will never reach down into the lives of the people who make up the congregation. It is not necessary for a pastor to be brilliant or popular in order to be a real evangelist, but if he is

dominated by a desire to save souls, if he is concerned lest the year's work shall close without a real harvest, he is in a very real sense an evangelistic pastor and I believe his spirit will soon become prominent in the church. He will foster this spirit in every organization and it will soon manifest itself in his preaching. Not every sermon will necessarily be an evangelistic sermon, but it will always present Christ. It will be possible for no one to go away from the service without having an opportunity to think seriously about his relationship to Jesus Christ.

It is a strange thing that most of the criticism which comes concerning our work as pastors comes from those who really expect the church to be evangelistic in its spirit even though these critics may not be participants in the work of the church. Some time ago at the close of a Sunday-night service, a man stopped to speak to me and told me that he was a traveling man and that he always enjoyed spending Sunday in Indianapolis because of the privilege of attending our church. Of course, this was pleasant for any pastor to hear, and then he made this rather significant

statement: "I like to come here because I am always sure of hearing the gospel."

My own experience with people has taught me that sometimes a man's conception of the gospel may be an exceedingly narrow thing, and I wondered if this man was of this type. A little conversation elicited the fact that he was a man who was broad-minded, a good thinker, and must have some reason for any statement which he made. So, I said to him: "What do you mean when you say that you like to come here because you hear the gospel? Do you not hear the gospel in the other churches that you visit as a traveling man?"

He replied: "If I could take you across the country with me on the long trips which I make, and let you visit the various churches which I visit, I am quite sure you would agree with me that my criticism is right. I find there are any number of ministers who are preaching on all sorts of social questions in the interest of all sorts of uplift movements, discussing books and literature and politics, but it is a real relief to enter into a church where the word of God is actually expounded and the Christian life

is taught in such a way as to help a traveling man who constantly meets temptation and who is away from home nearly all the time."

Not long after that I met a man who is well-known in our city as a club man, but whose interest in the church at that time was not very deep. It was during the days of the war, and he said to me, with a tone of pride in his voice, "Well, I went to church yesterday afternoon." I told him I thought that was a good thing for a man to do. Then he admitted the reason he went was because the military organization of which he was a member had been invited to that particular service. His significant criticism of the service follows:

"Why is it when a minister has an opportunity to preach to a church full of men, many of whom do not go to church except upon such an occasion, many of whom are pretty liberal in their lives and who, therefore, present an opportunity rarely to be had by a minister, why is it, I say, that a minister does not present the gospel?"

I said to him, "Didn't the man whom you heard yesterday afternoon preach a real

sermon?" His answer was: "No, it was an address which could have been given in any college or forum or club. He never mentioned Jesus Christ once in the whole time he was preaching."

Of course, this was a revelation to me because I knew the pastor and knew the church, and I was somewhat shocked to find this club man giving his impression of a service.

A little later on a very well-known judge of our State said to me, "Do you know what I think this country needs more than anything else at the present time?" And I said, "No, Judge, but I should be very glad to know what your opinion is on that matter." His answer rather surprised me because of the fact that he is a judge and, therefore, has a legal mind and is apt to think very carefully before he speaks. He said, "I think the greatest need of American life today is evangelism, and by that I mean a safe and sane kind of evangelism which nevertheless presents Christ as a Saviour from sin."

Perhaps I can emphasize more clearly what I mean, now, in relating one other

story. A very well-known minister of this country was sent overseas by the Y. M. C. A. during the days of the war, and his first experience was in a hut crowded with soldiers who were going to the front line within a very few days. They were not supposed to know that, but those who mingled with the soldiers will remember that they seemed to know everything that headquarters knew, and when this man stood up he began his address that night thus: "Well, boys, I have come three thousand miles to talk to you, and I hardly know just what to say. I think I will let you decide the matter. Shall I preach a regular sermon or shall I give you a funny lecture?" And then he waited for the answer. I think he was rather surprised by the reply which came when a tall, rangy chap, way in the back of the room, arose and drawled out, "Well, Mr. Preacher, if you have come three thousand miles to talk to a bunch of men that are going into hell within three days and you don't know whether to preach a sermon or give a funny lecture, I suspect *you* had better give a funny lecture."

That doughboy had sized up that preacher, and it is a fact that if a man had gone from this country to deal with men who were on the verge of eternity and had no more sense than to ask a question like that, the doughboy had a perfect right to let him know what his opinion of him was. Perhaps it is needless to say that that minister did not remain long overseas.

All of these are criticisms, although hardly any of them were offered in the spirit of criticism, nevertheless they help us to see the need of continuing a strong spirit of evangelism in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the next place, I believe that this spirit, if the pastor has it, will be reflected in all departments of church life. It will certainly influence the Sunday school, and the officers and teachers of the school will never be satisfied as long as scholars are not finding their way into the kingdom. Some of the best Sunday school superintendents that I have ever known have been men who had a consuming passion along evangelistic lines.

I was in the City of Plainfield, New Jersey, a good many years ago when I was

still a student in the Seminary, and was conducting some meetings in a Presbyterian church. The superintendent of the Sunday school was a very well-known citizen of that community and quite well-known in New York business circles. When the last night of the meetings came, I was speaking to the audience and congratulating them upon the fine work which they had rendered during the days of the meetings and which had led so many boys and girls and men and women to accept Christ; then I asked all of the converts and any one else who had a word of testimony to offer to give it, and quite a number responded to my invitation. Just as I was about to close the meeting, the superintendent of the Sunday school turned to me and said, "May I say a word?" And I readily assented. Then taking a memorandum book out of his pocket, he called attention to the fact that there were several pages there that were filled with names, and also to the fact that when the meetings began, many of the Sunday school teachers in the school had come to him and asked him to pray with them for their scholars. He put down the name of

every scholar for whom prayer was asked. Then he said to the audience: "I think you would be interested to see how God has answered their prayers. Wherever you see a blue line drawn across the name, it means that soul has come to Christ." When he held up the book, it seemed as though every name had a blue mark drawn through it.

Whenever a superintendent has a spirit like that, it will surely reach the hearts and lives of the teachers and of the scholars and there will be a spirit of evangelism permeating that school. One of the greatest joys that a pastor has is to have teachers who have this spirit and who are constantly on the lookout for their scholars. I am thinking of a class in my own church where it was a very ordinary thing for the teacher to come before the deacons every few weeks with one or two of her scholars who had been led to Christ. In fact, it got to the place where if many weeks passed by and that teacher did not come with one of her scholars, the deacons would really think something was the matter. She led large numbers of young ladies into the kingdom of God.

I like the spirit of that young man who, as he passed me the other day in the church, said, "Doctor Taylor, I will soon have some of my boys for the deacons." There had been no evangelistic meetings, no particular program of evangelism, but it was in the heart of that young man to try to reach all of his boys and he felt a responsibility for doing it. So far as I know, he has led every boy to Christ.

Again, this spirit will be prominent in the social life of the church. Every event will prove to be an opportunity to influence people toward the acceptance of Christ. In our church we have found that it is possible in our Brotherhood meetings to get a record of every one present, together with a statement on a card as to the relation of the men to any church. Afterward, we follow up all men who have no particular relationship to any church. In this way, by process of visitation, we have been able to reach men and ultimately lead them into the kingdom and into the church. This spirit is so prominent that it is an ordinary thing for one of the young men of the church to speak of his hope that he will have the privi-

lege of leading some man of the Brotherhood to Christ.

The other evening, at the close of a Brotherhood meeting, one of the prominent business men of the city turned to me and, mentioning another very prominent business man in the city who is not a member of a church, said, "I think we are going to get that man very soon." Nothing had been said about evangelism. Here was the spirit of evangelism at work in that young man.

We find that in the social meetings of the ladies, it is possible to secure names of people who are not connected with any church and again by a process of visitation get them interested and in some instances reach them for the church.

We have an athletic department in our work and a young man at the head of it who is a business man and who gladly gives his time freely to the organization of bowling teams, baseball teams, basket-ball teams, and in fact anything that appeals to the lives of the young men. We have been very successful in athletics and our basket-ball teams and our baseball teams have won so many silver cups that we hardly know what

to do with them. But we have done infinitely more than win silver cups. During the time that these teams have been winning games, the manager of the athletic teams has been winning souls, and there has not been a baseball season for a long time when the pastor of the church has not had the privilege of baptizing some of the members of that team into the fellowship of the church. This is also true of the basketball teams, and today, after ten years of experience along that line, some of the leading young men in our young people's work are those who first came in contact with the church because they wanted to be on one of the athletic teams.

Now, I believe this spirit of evangelism is possible in any church and that it may be promoted if a pastor really desires to see souls won to Christ. If a pastor will begin with his officers, his deacons and trustees, the heads of all of his departments, perhaps calling them together for an evening of conversation, and gradually unveil to them his own feelings with relation to the program of evangelism in the church, he will sow the seed that will gradually take root and after

a while bear a splendid harvest. He may not be exceedingly successful the first year, but that sort of thing carried on for a period of years will bring results not only in one year but will promote a spirit of evangelism in the church which will carry on for many years. I believe again that whenever there is a meeting of the official boards, the pastor ought to have something to say that will stir the imagination and quicken the pulse of every member of the board in response to this passion.

A great many years ago I knew a Y. M. C. A. secretary in a large city who seemed to be at all times having a spirit of evangelistic effort in the association. Talking one day with a member of his Board of Directors, this man said to me: "He is a peculiar sort of a secretary in some ways. He never has a written report to make to the Board of Directors. He comes in and talks to us, tells us about what has been going on, and he always winds up with a story of the conversion of some young man that thrills us so that when he gets through, we are ready to give him anything he wants and do anything he asks us to do. I think

that secretary has done more to stimulate the lives of the Board of Directors along the line of evangelism than any pastor that I know here in the city."

I have watched the progress of that association for thirty years, and after this man had gone away, another man took his place, who was trained under him, and that same spirit of evangelism has carried through all the years, and I know of no association in America that has had more of the spirit of evangelism and led more young men and boys to Christ than that one.

Another method of promoting this spirit is to enlist a group of people in prayer who will agree, with the pastor, to pray constantly that souls may be led to Christ. The group may be a very small one, in any case it must be a very select one, composed only of those who feel a real desire along this line.

Over and over again I have gone into my pulpit on a Sunday night when I have felt that my message was an exceedingly poor one and have wondered whether it could be used of God at all, and have felt rather depressed over the possibility of the evening

service, and again and again just before standing up to preach, I have seen a small group of young people come into the rear of the church and take their places among the worshipers. I have felt my pulse quicken and my faith increase because I have known that that group of young people have been in an upper room, on their knees, and have been pleading with God for victory in the evening service. That group of young people will never know how many times they have lifted the pastor from failure to success because of the inspiration which came from seeing them come into the service at a time when it seemed as though the evening would be a failure.

Of course, any wise pastor will organize and perhaps himself teach a training class for personal workers. There will be more of this later on. At the close of every service when strangers come to meet the pastor, names and addresses may be secured by those whom the pastor has associated with him and during the week these strangers may be called upon, and if properly followed up, often prove to be splendid prospects. Let us always remember that the Sunday

school is the great evangelistic field of the church. A vast majority of converts come from our families or those in the Sunday school. Incidentally, they make the best kind of church-members. We have them where we can teach and help them.

Much attention ought to be given to the spirit of evangelism in the Bible school. Special decision days are valuable, but very great care should be taken in addressing large numbers of young people, especially of the junior department where they are so ready to respond and where they so frequently hardly know what they are doing. I believe that a quiet talk, by a consecrated teacher, will often produce better results among the smaller children than any appeal made to the entire school by a pastor.

One of the best methods which I ever used in dealing with a Bible school has been to call together the officers and teachers for several weeks, each Sunday morning before the beginning of the Bible school, for a season of prayer and then on a set day when everything has been organized carefully, have a service where every hymn shall contribute to the spirit of evangelism,

where the prayer shall be brief and to the point, where there shall be no lesson taught, but a short talk given by the pastor about accepting Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour. Then, without giving an invitation, I have turned the school over to the teachers, having, of course, told the teachers how to approach their scholars one by one in the class, urging them to accept Jesus as Saviour. In this way the teacher has the privilege of leading his or her own scholars to Christ, which is one of the greatest privileges any teacher can have.

Of course, it will be understood that prayer will be offered as soon as the class gathers, then the teacher will immediately approach those who are not Christians and ask them there and then quietly to accept Christ as Saviour and Lord. If there are Christians in the class, the teacher has, sometime before this meeting, arranged with these scholars quietly to bow their heads in prayer, while the teacher talks with the unsaved. Then after a reasonable period, the school is called together again and after a hymn and prayer, the pastor asks those who have told their teachers that

they will accept Christ as their Saviour, to stand. Then after these have in this way confessed Christ, the pastor follows this with an appeal to other scholars who have not yet decided, to stand with their friends, and in this way many others are led to confess Christ. The principal thing about this is that the teacher has the privilege of doing the work and securing her own harvest.

These scholars, of course, are followed up during the week in their homes, by the Sunday school workers or by the pastor, and the connection is made with the home that opens the way for them to unite with the church in a most favorable way.

I know some one is now asking the question: What about special meetings?

I believe in special meetings. I have conducted them in many of the large cities of our country and at one time gave three years of my life to that special work. I believe in evangelism and in the evangelist wherever he may be necessary, but I believe that many pastors lose a great deal of joy out of their lives by depending upon outside help rather than by putting into opera-

tion some of the methods which I have suggested, and which, I believe, will bring even better results than those obtained in special meetings.

In the twenty-one years I have been the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Indianapolis, we have never had but two outside men come to the church to hold meetings. One of these was a great Bible expositor who gave no attention to evangelism, but rather to the exposition of the word for two weeks, and those two weeks were filled with blessings. The other was Dr. George Truett, of Dallas, Texas, who spent two weeks with us and who did a most excellent work, and we had a rich harvest. All other efforts of an evangelistic nature have been carried on by the pastor himself, and the church has always been willing to respond to his appeal for this work. But, perhaps in all the twenty-one years, we have not had meetings more than five or six times, depending rather upon the constant spirit of evangelism in the church than upon special efforts.

When Doctor Truett was with us, after talking with the teachers and officers one

night, he made this remark concerning our Bible school, which is a very large one: "I have never known a school that was so thoroughly worked up as this one." This was in a very real sense a compliment to the teachers and officers of the school, indicating that they were constantly reaping a harvest among the scholars and that the number of unsaved in our school was comparatively small.

A great deal more could be said about the so-called evangelistic church, but I am thoroughly convinced that the greatest need in American church life today is a church of the type which I have tried to indicate, and while I would not for a moment suggest that the church over which I preside has attained the ideal, we are constantly striving toward it, and I believe that the membership is a unit in the idea that evangelism must always be dominant in the life of the church.

III

PRAYER AND EVANGELISM

All scripture is . . . profitable for . . . instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

—2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

—James 5: 16.

PRAYER AND EVANGELISM

Of course there will be no evangelism without prayer, and there will be no spirit of prayer without a desire for the saving of the lost.

Dr. Robert E. Speer has said, "Communion without service is a dream; and service without communion, ashes."

The spirit of evangelism is created and sustained by the prayer life of the church. When the fire on the altar of prayer is allowed to die down, there will be a corresponding fading out of the spirit of passion for souls.

A celebrated Bible teacher on returning to this country after a prolonged absence said, "I find in America a passionless pulpit and an indifferent pew." Of course, the two things go together. Whenever the pastor becomes careless in his prayer life, the temperature of the church will go down. Whenever he loses his concern for souls, it may be traced to a spirit of indifference in his prayer life. This indifference comes

from a lack of daily devotional Bible study.

The Daily Watch, instituted by the Sudent Volunteer Movement many years ago, has saved many a minister and missionary from losing his concern for souls, because no man can persistently study the word of God for his own life and become indifferent to the claim of Christ on his life to win souls.

One of the dangerous temptations of theological students and ministers is to think that studying the Bible for recitation or sermon is sufficient to develop spiritual life.

Years ago when a student in the Seminary, my chum and I were discussing the lack of spiritual life in the student body. We felt it was due to a lack of daily devotional Bible study, and resolved to find out how many of the students studied the Bible for the development of their own lives.

After careful survey, we found that over eighty-five per cent. of the students were not doing any Bible study at all except for classroom work.

A few years later I was speaking for several days to the students in a Y. M.

C. A. training school, and after one of the services, the president of the Cabinet asked me to meet with the Cabinet that night at the close of the evening service. There were about ten or twelve men present in that meeting. The president said, "Now we would like to have you discuss with us the question, How can we deepen the spiritual lives of the students here?" Of course, all the students were Christian men, all going out to do Y. M. C. A. work; all felt they had been called to that leadership among young men, and yet they acknowledged something was wrong in the spiritual lives of these men who were to be spiritual leaders of others.

I said: "Well, before we consider the lives of the other students, suppose we begin here in the Cabinet. How many of you men in this Cabinet keep the Morning Watch, that is, give some time every morning to the study of the Bible and prayer for your own lives?" There was a quietness for a moment and then every man in that group, with the exception of two, said, "We do nothing in the way of Bible study except for class work," and prayer was limited to

a few minutes at night or perhaps in the morning.

"Well," I said, "we need not concern ourselves yet about the student body, but we do need to see what is the matter with the spiritual life of the Cabinet." Then after a short talk on the necessity of meeting the needs of our own spiritual lives, we had a prayer-meeting that lasted for over an hour, and I believe that some of the men there learned the secret of influencing other men's lives.

What a strange thing it is that so little thought or attention is given to prayer in the usual program of the church, when so much thought is given to the idea of prayer in the Bible. Indeed, the whole Bible is filled with the atmosphere of prayer. From the first prayer of the Bible, that of a father for his son, "Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee," to the last sentence of the New Testament, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," the Bible is a book of prayer.

Abraham's pleading for the cities of the plain was in reality a passionate prayer for the salvation of his own relatives. Jacob's night of prayer which resulted in his be-

coming Israel, a Prince with God, made the change in a life that affected the history of the people of God. Elijah prayed, and the heavens became as brass overhead and the land suffered a drought that caused the king to realize the power of Jehovah, the God of Israel. Elijah faced the heavens on Carmel and by prayer won the victory and reestablished faith in the hearts of the discouraged people.

Daniel, a captive in a heathen land, refused to be intimidated by the king. Kneeling in prayer before his God he is forever an example to young men to encourage them to remain true to their religious convictions when surrounded by the forces of evil.

When we enter the New Testament, we find that even more than in the Old Testament we are in the atmosphere of prayer. Our Saviour's life was a life of prayer and his teaching on the subject of prayer occupies a large place in the gospel. All of the great events in Jesus' life were preceded, and many of them followed, by prayer. He was praying at his baptism; before choosing the Twelve he spent a whole

night in prayer, and after that night of prayer delivered the wonderful Sermon on the Mount.

After his rejection by the favored cities he prayed; again, after healing a leper, and after feeding the five thousand; before he left the disciples, before the crucifixion and during the crucifixion, Jesus prayed. When the end came and he was about to leave his disciples, he led them out until they were over against Bethany and lifted up his hands and blessed them. "And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them and was carried up unto heaven."

In fact, the Four Gospels have infinitely more to say about prayer than some of the doctrines that the churches have been quarreling about for the past ten years. One of the reasons why we have had so much friction and so little evangelism is because we have done so much talking and so little praying.

While in the seminary, I realized that one must find something definite in the line of Bible study for one's own devotional life or there would be a great barrenness in spiritual service. In order to overcome this

I spent a year, every morning, on a program of Bible study that was outlined as follows:

I took the Four Gospels and cut out everything in them which related to the prayer life of Jesus and made a scrap-book of all of the statements concerning his life of prayer—when he prayed, where he prayed, what he prayed for, and answers to prayer. I found this an intensely interesting study, so much so that I followed it immediately, using the same captions and studying Jesus' teaching on the subject of prayer—where to pray, when to pray, what to pray for, how to pray, the spirit of prayer. By this time my interest had so deepened in this subject that I began with the Book of Acts and went straight through the New Testament.

One of my most treasured possessions is a very large blank book filled with quotations from the Bible on prayer. In fact, I have the teaching of the entire New Testament on that subject so readily at hand that I have found it comparatively easy to preach on prayer whenever I desire to.

One who studies the New Testament on the subject of prayer will be convinced that

the early church paid a great deal of attention to this matter. The Book of Acts might just as well have been called the Book of the Prayer Life of the Apostolic Church because nearly every chapter is one in which prayer has a large place. For instance, in the first chapter we read that as soon as the Lord Jesus had ascended to heaven, the disciples returned to the upper room and waited on God in prayer. In the second chapter we have the same group upon their knees in prayer and the descent of the Spirit of God followed by the preaching of the great sermon on the Day of Pentecost.

In the third chapter we have the story of the first miracle of the early church, on the occasion when Peter and James went up to the House of the Lord at the hour of prayer. In the fourth chapter we find the disciples again upon their knees in prayer, because they are now beginning to suffer persecution, and again we have a second infilling of the Spirit of God.

In the sixth chapter, as the church begins to expand and its duties increase, we find the deacons being selected to care for the

temporal welfare of the church, and these were selected in the spirit of prayer. In the seventh chapter, Stephen overleaps the bounds of the diaconate and becomes an evangelist and preaches with such mighty power that he is stoned to death, but he enters the eternal world praying, as did his Lord, for those who were killing him.

In the eighth chapter, Peter and John went down to Samaria and prayed for the new disciples that they might receive the Holy Spirit. In the ninth chapter we have an illustration of the mighty power of prayer, provided we have imagination enough to see what was going on. Saul went to Damascus in order to persecute the Christians who were living there, and one can readily understand that when this young zealot left for Damascus and the church of Jerusalem knew what was going to take place, they at once began to pray for their brethren in Damascus.

It is easy to be seen that the disciples in Damascus, knowing of the coming of this persecutor, would naturally wait before God in prayer that something might be done to save them from the disaster which was ap-

parent, and between Jerusalem and Damascus we see Saul stricken down, crying out in an agony of desire, blind and led into the city of Damascus, converted to the Lord Jesus and becoming the great preacher and apostle of the early church.

In the tenth chapter God reveals to Peter, in a vision, the fact that the Gentiles are not common and unclean, but worthy of the gospel; and to Cornelius comes the word to send for Peter. They come together and the door of the Gentile world is flung wide open, and the gospel now has an opportunity to reach all people.

In prayer Peter raises Dorcas from the dead. In prayer the church of Antioch receives its command to release Paul and Barnabas to begin the program of foreign missions, and while the church waits in prayer Peter is released from prison by an angel. When Paul and Silas are in prison, they organize a prayer-meeting which results in their freedom and the conversion of the jailer.

Indeed, the whole Book of Acts is filled with the stories of the prayers of the early Christians.

When we enter the Epistles, we find that every one begins with prayer, ends in prayer, and is fairly saturated with the spirit of prayer; and finally we come to the end of our New Testament which closes with a prayer, " Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

One of the differences between the church of our day and the apostolic church is this: when we come to a crisis in our work we have a dinner and sit around a table and discuss our troubles; they gathered in an upper room, went down on their knees and placed the difficulty before God, then waited for word from on high. A little less talking with men and more talking with God might help us when we face trials or difficulties in our church life.

I am absolutely certain that the only hope of creating and maintaining a spirit of evangelism in the church is to foster a spirit of prayer in the lives of the members. This spirit can be created and maintained, first, by urging the people to keep a prayer list containing the names of those in whom they are interested and whom they want to see brought to Christ.

One of the richest experiences in my

Christian life has been right along this line. Some years ago I picked up a little book containing a number of promises for those who prayed, a number of suggestions from the Word of God concerning prayer, and then blank spaces in which one could place the names of those for whom he desired to pray, together with the date when the name was inserted, the particular promise pleaded for that individual, and the date when the prayer was answered. I still have that little book. In many places in the book, names have been crossed off, indicating that the prayer has been answered, and in some instances many years have elapsed from the date of the beginning of the prayer and the time when the answer came.

A score of illustrations come to mind. While teaching a Bible class in a church in the city of Newark where I was the associate pastor, there was a young man in my class whom I desired very much to win, but who seemed to resist all of my efforts. Nearly twenty years later, one Sunday I had been preaching as a supply in that church, and in the afternoon was on my way down to speak at a Y. M. C. A. meet-

ing. A young man stopped me on the street and said, "I don't think you remember me." I looked at him and replied, "No, I am afraid I do not." Said he, "I am Harold ——." I said, "Well, since I have seen you, you have grown a mustache, and you are now wearing glasses, and these things have completely changed your appearance." It was the young man who used be in my class. After a little conversation, he said, "Are you going to speak this afternoon in the Y. M. C. A.?" I replied in the affirmative and said I should be glad to see him there. He stated that he had an errand to perform, but if he finished in time he would try to come to the meeting. That was all that was said.

At the close of the afternoon meeting, I had been speaking with a few young men who had made their decision for Christ, and was about to leave the hall, when one of the personal workers came to me and said, "There is a young man here who has accepted Christ this afternoon and he says he knows you." Of course I went to speak to him and I was delighted to find that this was my friend Harold. It was a real plea-

sure to mark off Harold's name and realize that after all of these years Christ had given me the answer to that prayer.

Another one of the young men in whom I was greatly interested was one who had resisted every effort on the part of his parents to enter the church because, as he put it, "When I was twelve years old I wanted to enter the church and my father felt I didn't know enough, so I guess I don't know enough yet."

I remember distinctly how earnestly I worked with that young man. I got him to go on a camping trip with me and had him there for two weeks out in the woods, and while there did everything I could to help him to see the truth, but he stedfastly persisted in turning away from every overture which I made.

For many years after that, whenever I spoke in that city, his father would be in the audience and would always come to me and say: "Well, every one of us is in the church with the exception of Robert. I hope you are still praying for him." I continued to pray for him for many years. Within the past two years, while talking

with the pastor of the church where this young man's family went, I heard the pastor say that he had received a large subscription for a certain fund which the denomination was then gathering, from a man whom he called Doctor ——. I asked, "Do you mean to tell me that that man is now a member of your church?" The pastor replied, "Yes, and I had a great experience in leading him into the kingdom." He then told me that one morning while he was in his study he was deeply impressed to go to see this young man. He was then a very prominent physician in the city. It seemed to him very foolish to attempt to see him at a time when he knew he would be very busy with his patients, but he could not resist the impression and finally went down to this doctor's office.

He told me that the office was filled with patients. He waited until the door opened and then when the doctor saw him, knowing him to be the pastor of the church where he occasionally attended, he asked: "Is there anything special that you wanted to see me about? If so, I shall see you before these other patients."

He said, "I want to see you about something very special and perhaps I had better see you after the patients have gone."

"No," said the doctor, "you come in now." He went into the private office and said at once to him, "Doctor, I have come to tell you that I believe the time has come for you to accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour and to come into the church." The physician looked at him for an instant and said, "Well, the fact is I have been thinking about that matter myself and I believe I am ready." "And," said my friend, "it was the simplest matter in the world, there in that office while many patients were waiting outside, to lead that physician to Christ."

He is now in the church, is an officer, and one of the most active and loyal supporters of his pastor. It was again a great pleasure for me to cross that man's name off my prayer list after over thirty years of prayer.

Incidents like these could be multiplied, not only in my own experience, but in the lives of many who have tried keeping a prayer list.

I was on a train, coming through the

State of New Jersey a few years ago, when a young man stepped up to me and asked if I had not at one time been a Secretary in the Dover, New Jersey, Y. M. C. A. I replied that I had, and he reminded me of the fact that he was at one time a member of that Association. I remembered him as a young man whom I had earnestly prayed for, and continued to pray for, for years after I left the Association. My heart was filled with joy when he told me that he was a member of the Methodist Church, actively interested in the work, was married, and all the members of his family were also in that church. So, his name went off the prayer list after many years of prayer.

Another method of creating the spirit of prayer in the membership is for the pastor to send letters to the members of the church at times when any special program is being promoted in the interest of the church. Sometimes it is a program of finance, and other times it may be a program of evangelism, but in any case, a letter from the pastor asking the members to pray earnestly that the result may be achieved creates an interest in prayer and

a larger faith on the part of the membership.

I have found it very helpful to ask for prayer on behalf of those who are drifting away from the church. This, in turn, checks up those who are in danger of drifting away by asking them to pray for others.

Still another method is by occasionally announcing on the church calendar that the pastor requests the prayers of the people for the salvation of many who are attending the services, or are in the Sunday school but have not yet received Christ as their personal Saviour. By this method, two results are achieved: First, the calling of the attention of the people to the needs of the case, and second, calling the attention of the unsaved to their own needs because of their reading this announcement.

One of the most successful methods in my own work has been the organization of prayer bands, and in our own church we have seen glorious results achieved by the young people themselves as they have met from Sunday to Sunday in their prayer band. Almost invariably two groups of young people in my church have met on

Sunday night between the time of the closing of the young people's meeting and the beginning of the evening service, the young men meeting in one room and the young women meeting in another room, and after a discussion as to the needs, each group waits upon God in prayer, asking that these needs may be met.

When a great financial program was on in our church some years ago, we organized a prayer band that numbered over seven hundred, these people agreeing by signing a card that they would pray every day for the success of the program. It was expected that our church would be asked for about $100,000 for this fund, and we were somewhat surprised when later on we found that our apportionment was $290,000. With great concern, the pastor presented the matter to the officers of the church. For several days prayers had been going on because a few of the leaders were much concerned lest the officers might think the apportionment was unreasonable. Plans were made to present the matter in the best possible way. When it was presented, the pastor waited for objections to come and

to his surprise one of the officers said quietly: "We ought to do our part. The only way to get this money is to go after it enthusiastically and we can secure it." Another man said, "It is just as easy to raise $300,000 as it is to raise $290,000." All of the officers agreed.

The first move to raise this large sum of money was to organize a band of people to pray daily for its success. Over seven hundred people signed cards. It was agreed to raise the money in one week. The result was gratifying; by Saturday evening the amount subscribed was about $230,000. But there it stayed. Apparently we had reached the limit of our possibilities.

That Saturday night the Executive Committee met at the pastor's house to discuss the situation. All of the large subscriptions were in. Evidently we were beaten. As the meeting broke up and the men started away, the pastor said, "We are at our wits' end, but God still rules, and we must now put the whole matter in his hands."

That evening one man had been asked to increase his subscription by $15,000, but he

refused to make any additional subscription. He had already pledged $25,000.

It was a restless night for the pastor, and about three o'clock in the morning he awakened and his first thought, of course, was, What can we do? Then he arose, knelt in prayer and sought God's help and went back to sleep. Sunday morning came. It had been agreed that the pastor would make no appeal for funds that morning, as it was the day for communion service.

As the pastor was going to his room in the church before the service, he met the man who had refused the night before to increase his subscription. "How are you this morning?" said the pastor. "Not very well. I did not sleep well," said the deacon. "I woke up about three o'clock."

"So did I," said the pastor.

"What did you do?"

"I got up and began to pray."

"Why, so did I," said the deacon.

"Well," said the pastor, "I am going to be frank with you, deacon, I prayed for you." The deacon choked up and said nothing, then the pastor said, "Come into my room."

They went in and the door was shut. "Now, deacon, I never have asked you or any other individual in this church for money. I have asked for money from the pulpit but never have I asked an individual for a cent. This morning I am going to break all of my rules and I am going to ask you for $15,000 more for this work." There were a few other words said, and then the deacon, with tears in his eyes, said, "I will do it."

Then another deacon was called in and sent to ask for $5,000 from another friend who had promised to help if more was needed. This member immediately responded and $20,000 had been secured, but we were still $50,000 short of the victory.

As the pastor was closing the communion service, a young man arose and said: "Pastor, we know it is not your wish to make a plea for funds this morning. Would you object to our passing the cards without any pleas and receive anything the people may feel like giving?"

The pastor asked the people if they were willing and there was a murmur of assent. The cards were passed and $7,000 was sub-

scribed at once. The pastor then urged the people to wait on God during the afternoon while the teams were making their last calls.

In the evening the atmosphere was charged with triumph. After the sermon was preached, the pastor asked the teams to report, and the great audience was thrilled as the figures mounted up. When the last team reported, and it was seen that $306,000 had been subscribed, the whole audience spontaneously arose and sang the Doxology.

That campaign was a success largely because God had a chance to release power through channels that had been opened by prayer. Prayer is a means of bringing to pass the release of forces that would save the world.

The last method which I desire to mention is one which I have used many times in evangelistic meetings and with great success. Early in the meetings I suggest that if there are those who desire prayer for their friends or relatives, we will agree to pray every night for individuals under certain conditions, and the conditions are these: First, the name of the individual or

individuals must be sent to the platform, and the relationship of the one who is making the request to the one for whom the request is made must be stated. For instance, if it is a Sunday-school teacher, the teacher will say, " Please pray for my scholars," and then name them. The one who makes the request must sign the petition. The names of those for whom the request is made must be placed on the request. Of course, these names are never mentioned. If it is desired that these persons shall be prayed for every night, a new petition must come in every evening during the meetings, otherwise no prayer will be made for them.

The result of this is that night after night I have read requests, sometimes for one or two, sometimes for twenty-five, who are either members of the Sunday school or of some other organization. I have known one Sunday-school teacher to send in a request for fifteen members of the class every night for three weeks. Near the close of the meetings, I have asked all of those who have been making requests for their friends and who have had their requests granted to send in a note of thanksgiving in

order that the people may join in thanksgiving for the answers to our prayers.

One of the most beautiful things that ever happens in a meeting is to have the privilege of reading a number of thanksgiving notes at the close of the services.

In the City of Trenton, New Jersey, I received a request one night with the names of over twenty girls on it. That request came in every night. I asked the pastor about the one who was making the request and found out it was a Sunday-school teacher who had a large class of young ladies and who was very much concerned about those who were unsaved. Night after night, just before beginning the preaching service, I would see that young lady come in, sometimes with six, eight, or ten other young women with her, and I found out that she was inviting these girls in groups to take dinner with her at night and then she would bring them all to the meeting.

At the end of that meeting, every one of those girls had been converted with the exception of two, one of whom was sick and in a hospital, and the other was away on a visit.

In the town of Fairhaven, Vermont, one night I received a request for prayer written on a large sheet of paper, evidently torn out of a child's composition-book. The request was written in large, scrawly letters, evidently in a child's hand, and read as follows:

"Dear Mr. Tailor: Please pray for my papa that he may give his heart to Jesus so that our home may be better for the children."

When I read that request that night, I confess that a lump came into my throat as I visualized the little child who must have made it, and I said to the audience when I read it, "I do not know whether this man is in the audience or not, but if he is and he recognizes that note as from his child, if I were that man, I would not sleep tonight until I had given my heart to Christ in answer to that child's plea." It was a bow drawn at a venture, but the man was in the audience and recognized the request.

On the last night of the meetings, I received the same sort of note on the same kind of paper and written in the same way, and that note read:

"Dear Mr. Tailor: Please ask the people to thank God with me. My papa has given his heart to Jesus and our home is already better for the children."

There was hardly a dry eye in the congregation that night when that note was read. At the close of the service, a great big Vermont Yankee stood waiting for me and by his side was a beautiful little girl, and this man, as he gripped my hand almost convulsively, said, "I am the man for whom that child made the request, Mr. Taylor, and I sincerely hope that the home is always going to be right for the children."

That little child knew nothing about the philosophy of prayer, but she believed that there was a loving God, high up in the heavenly world, who would hear the cry of a little child and answer her.

It will be a great day in the lives of all of us when we have the spirit of that little child.

IV

USING THE MEN OF THE CHURCH

For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. —*Matt. 10: 20.*

And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

—*Luke 22: 32.*

USING THE MEN OF THE CHURCH

A NUMBER of years ago, one of the young business men of the church came to me and said that he had a plan that he would like to present which he thought was workable and would result in reaching a large number of young men. I arranged a time for him to show me his plan and I found that he had a map of that part of the city surrounding our church, and upon the map he located every school and college and practically all of the boarding and fraternity houses in our vicinity.

After he explained the map to me, he said, "There are literally hundreds of young men in the vicinity of our church who are either in business or in college, and I believe many of them might be reached and brought into attendance upon our Bible school and the church if the plan which I am going to suggest could be carried out."

The First Baptist Church of Indianapolis, at that time, was surrounded by a large number of boarding-houses and fraternity

houses owing to the fact that it is located in the vicinity of a number of colleges, medical schools, a dental school, two law schools, a veterinary college, and two or three colleges of music, together with the Y. M. C. A. These very naturally brought a large number of young men to our vicinity. One could see at once that there was an opportunity which ought not to be missed.

This young man was tremendously enthusiastic about the program, and the only question was how could we get enough men who would persistently follow out his plan. At his suggestion, I called together a large number of men and we spent an evening discussing the situation and listening to my friend outline his plan. At the close of the meeting, after prayer, we asked for men to become volunteers to meet with him every Saturday night and in companies of two, visit all of these places where men might be found and endeavor to get them to attend church on Sunday.

As a result of this, we had twenty-five men who were willing to undertake the work, and they began the next Saturday

night under his direction. It was not very long before we saw a constant stream of young men coming into our church services and into our young men's Bible class.

This work was continued for a number of years, and the only reason why it is not continued now is owing to the fact that the neighborhood has entirely changed and become a business neighborhood, and these boarding-houses and fraternity houses have moved away.

As soon as it was found that we could reach a large number of these young men, we made our Sunday-night service one which would interest them when they came. A great deal of attention was paid to the singing, and a goodly number of men were on hand to welcome these strangers and to visit with them after the service. In this way, scores of them were brought to the pulpit to meet the pastor.

Of course, every effort was made to link them up with one of the Bible classes, and that class in turn became responsible for their attendance. It was not very long before all of the boarding-houses in our vicinity became accustomed to having these

young men visit them on Saturday nights. In fact, in the fraternity houses the fraternity men welcomed them and became strong friends of the Baptist boys who came to invite them to go to church.

We soon found it possible to enlist large numbers of business men in the service, and the result was that on Sunday night we always had a very large percentage of men in the audience. Every Sunday night I asked the men in the audience to stand and sing, and on many occasions it looked as though we were having a men's meeting instead of a mixed gathering.

The young men's class grew to an average attendance of about one hundred, and on Sunday nights it was not unusual to see as many as four to five hundred men in the audience.

This method was continued for several years, and today we have a large number of these men in our church who are actively engaged in the work and can always be depended upon to go visit other men because of the fact that they themselves were reached in this way. I believe this method to be far superior to any advertising that

can be done, such as leaving cards of invitation in homes or in schools.

After this work was well under way, it was decided to organize this same group of men for personal work because we found that we were continually receiving letters at the church from people all over the country who were asking us to look up their sons who had come into the community to go to school or to work. In the course of a year, we received a large number of letters from parents and others asking us to look after these young men who had come to our city. We organized this group with a president and secretary, and the other members of the group were simply workers. I believe the method which I am about to describe can be used in any city church with great success. In fact, after an experience of fifteen years or more, I have never found anything to excel this method of reaching young men.

As soon as a letter would come to me from some mother or father, that letter would be sent at once to the president of this organization. He would immediately acknowledge receipt of the letter, stating

that he was looking after the person in question and would soon report success or failure. Then this young man would have three cards made out, each one containing the name, address, business address, and telephone number (if we could secure it) of the young man in question. One of these cards would be placed on file, another would be sent to one of the young men who had promised to call whenever a card was sent to them, and the third card was held in reserve. These men were instructed to make a report within a week from the time they received the card, if it was at all possible, and even if they could not find the man, to report that they were still looking after him.

If a week or two went by and we did not get a satisfactory report on the case, this card which had been held in reserve was sent immediately to another man and he would take up the case, not knowing that the young man was being looked after at all. By this method we always got a report.

While, of course, we were not always successful, nevertheless we did convince the young man that somebody was interested in

him, and in many instances the call proved successful.

I have literally hundreds of those cards in my files and some of them make most interesting reading. For instance, I picked up one the other day and found it was all frayed on the edges because it had been carried so long in the pocket of a personal worker, but it was literally filled with dates, indicating the various times that that man had called upon the stranger. This particular card stated that after a year and a half and sixteen calls, the young man had finally come in and united with the church.

Some very interesting sermons could be preached from the stories written on these cards.

I suppose that we have received into the fellowship of our church every year while this work was in progress anywhere from fifteen to thirty young men who were reached in this way. Indeed, some years many more than that number were received.

We have continued this method of follow-up and some of the most interesting letters that I have in my files are letters from parents whose hearts are filled with

thanksgiving because of the way in which their sons have been reached by the young men of the church. Indeed, it was perfectly possible to interest some of the leading business men of the city in this work, and there are today evidences all over the congregation of the success of the work.

One day there came from an anxious father down in the country a letter in which this father said that his boy had recently come to the city and was engaged in a business not very far away from the church and he wanted to know if I would look him up. Something about the letter appealed to me and so without sending it to the committee, I went over to this place myself. I found it to be an automobile garage within a square and a half of the church. When I asked for the young man, the employer said he was at work under a car, and going over to the car, I looked down and saw a young fellow in overalls, covered with dirt and grease, working industriously at something underneath the car. I asked him if his name was —— and he said that it was, and I could see as he crawled out from under the car that he was

taking me on suspicion and wondering who I was.

I introduced myself as the pastor of the Baptist church in the vicinity and told him I had heard he was in town and wanted to know if he wouldn't come over the next Sunday morning and meet me and I would introduce him to some of the young men, because I wanted to get him acquainted with the right sort of men in the community. When I left him, I was not at all sure he would come because he acted very shy and as though he wasn't particularly interested.

However, the next Sunday morning he was there, and I introduced him to some of the young fellows. It was a very simple thing to do—did not require very much time, but I look upon that man today with great joy. Today he is at the head of a large manufacturing concern, the president of one of the leading business men's clubs in the city, is one of the most popular young men in the entire city. He is now an associate superintendent in the Sunday school and his family is interested in the church.

One day I received a letter from Hono-

lulu, the writer of which said her only son was in our city in the dental college, that he had never been away from home before, and that she was quite anxious that some one should look after him while he was in the city. The letter ended, as many mothers' letters do end, by saying, "Please do not tell him that I have written to you." It is the anxious mother who is deeply concerned about her boy but very much afraid she will do more harm than good by telling anything about him. I turned this letter over to the young man who had started this program of personal work and said, "I think you had better look after this case yourself."

In a short time he came back to me and said: "I have found the young dental student. He is a fine chap, but I think he is going to be very shy about coming to church. However, I will follow him up."

A week or two later, he passed by the pulpit at the close of the service and said, "If I come by any Sunday night and just whisper 'Honolulu,' it will mean that the young fellow who is with me is the man you asked me to reach."

It was only a week or two after that, on a Sunday night, that I saw him coming toward the pulpit at the close of the service. With him was one of the handsomest young men I have ever seen. As my friend reached me, he simply said, "Honolulu," and then introduced this man without saying where he came from or anything about it. He just introduced him as a friend.

In a few moments' conversation, I had told him about some friends that I had in Honolulu and discovered that he was very well acquainted with them, and we were on friendly terms at once. It was only two or three weeks after that that a copy of a letter which had just gone to Honolulu came to my table. This letter, of course, had been written by the personal worker, and the letter read as follows:

"My dear Mrs. So-and-So: You will remember that I wrote you some time ago that we would endeavor to reach your son and interest him in our church. You will be glad to learn that he is now in attendance at the young men's Bible class every Sunday morning, has joined the B. Y. P. U. and has become quite active in our work.

We are glad indeed to have had a part in reaching your son. With best wishes, I am ——."

One can readily imagine what that letter meant to that anxious mother in far-away Honolulu.

Of course that young man, like many others whom we reach, has gone away. Indeed, there are hundreds of young men whom we have held steady for three or four years, during their college experience here, but who never united with our church. We have never been so much concerned about that as we have been concerned about rendering a piece of service to young men and to the Lord in helping them into the kingdom.

I suppose the most interesting case in all of this program of work for young men was that of a young man who came here from the country to work in one of our factories. He was a raw country boy when he arrived, and some one of his relatives had written asking me to try to interest him in the work of the church.

When I found him, he was very gracious in his manner, but evidently not very much

interested in anything pertaining to the church. He said he would come some time, but he didn't come. Because something about the young man appealed to me, I had one of the leading business men of the city, a man well along into middle life, go and see him. When I sent this man, I said to him: "Now here is a young man, raw from the country, whom somebody ought to reach. I believe that a business man like yourself will appeal to him more than one of the younger men." Although the man whom I was asking to go was one of the busiest men in our community, he said he would try to see him.

He called upon him at the Y. M. C. A., where he was rooming, and secured his promise to come, but he did not come. He called there three times and he did not come. Then the young man moved away to a boarding-house, and again this business man, after finding out where he was living, called upon him.

The young man said afterward that when this man came to the boarding-house and was making his fifth call upon him, and he knew him to be an exceedingly busy man,

he made up his mind that he ought to be paying some attention to the invitation. So, he said, " I made up my mind I would go once, and then perhaps he would be satisfied and that would be the end of it." So he came the next Sunday morning, and my friend, the business man, met him and introduced him to some of the young men. He entered into the young men's Bible class, but they had to follow him up a number of times before they could get him to attend regularly.

On the last Sunday night of that year I held a watch-night service, and when the invitation was extended thirty-two men and women came forward in token of an acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Saviour. This young man was in the group. I do not remember what became of all of those people. Some of them I know came into our church, others went into other churches where they would naturally go because of denominational affiliation. Some, probably, never entered any church, but none of us in our church will ever forget this young man. He was thoroughly converted.

About a month after that, he came to me

and said, "Did you know that I had been made president of a young men's class?" I said, "No."

"Well," he said, "I have. It is a class with only five members, so the office doesn't mean much perhaps, but I want you to know that we are going to put a cipher alongside of that five and we are going to have fifty members by the first day of June."

I have heard young men talk before in that way, but I did not throw any cold water on him. I patted him on the back and said, "Go to it; make it fifty or bust," using a term which I am not very much in the habit of using. I was not altogether proud of that sentence.

The next Sunday morning I saw five young men in the lobby of the church, each one wearing a blue ribbon on the lapel of his coat and on that blue ribbon, in gold letters, I read these words: "Fifty or bust by June first."

However, I was not going to criticize the use of my own language and so I smiled and went on.

In May of that year, I was in atten-

dance upon a convention in Des Moines, Iowa, and on Sunday morning, upon returning from the college church where I had been preaching, I received a telegram, which read: "We had sixty-two out today. We are not going to bust." This young man's name was signed to it.

On the following Sunday, when I was back in my church, he came to me and said, "Could we bring the members of our class into the church service this morning and have them sit together?" To this I replied, "Certainly, if you will arrange with the head usher so you can find seats enough."

That morning, he marched sixty-five young men, all of them under thirty years of age, down the aisle and they sat together. Practically all of this was the work of one young man who had been followed up persistently by a prominent business man until he came into the church. The eyes of that business man filled with tears that morning as he saw the result of the calls which he made upon that young man.

For a number of years this young man was one of the most successful workers

among our young people that we ever had, and when he decided to go to California the church met with a very decided loss. However, he is out there now, earnestly engaged in work and carrying on in the same way that he did in our church.

I suppose there are literally scores of young men who have come to know Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour because of the efforts of this young man and, shall we say, the persistence of a business man in trying to reach a young man for Jesus Christ.

Surely it will pay any church to give a good deal of attention to developing young men. Over and over again during those days I was asked this question, "Why don't you have an associate pastor to look after young men?" and my answer was, "I have anything between twenty-five and fifty splendid associate pastors who are taking care of the young men of this congregation." We not only reach large numbers of young men, but better still, we develop our young men so that today they are active and interested in the work of the kingdom.

V

PERSONAL WORK FOR TRAINING CLASSES

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

—*Acts 4: 12.*

PERSONAL WORK FOR TRAINING CLASSES

When I began my Christian experience as a young man, I soon discovered that there was no organization in the church of which I was a member which would help me very much to become a Christian worker. I was full of joy with the new experience and earnestly desiring to do anything I could to advance the cause of Christ.

The young people's society was helpful in developing ability to express one's self. The Sunday school was, to a certain extent, helpful in Bible work, but in neither one of these organizations was there very much opportunity for the development of knowledge of the Word of God, and for development of what little talent I may have had so that I could be of real service in the kingdom.

One day I noticed an advertisement in the evening paper, which stated that Bible classes were being held for young men every Sunday morning at the Y. M. C. A. Although I was not a member of the Y. M.

C. A. at that time, I decided to attend one of these classes, and accordingly presented myself on Sunday morning at nine-thirty and asked the General Secretary about entering a class. He told me there was a class studying the life of Christ, a class in Old Testament history, and a class in personal work.

After a little further inquiry, I decided that the class in personal work was the one I would like to join. The teacher was a business man who was gladly giving his time every Sunday morning to a group of young men who were trying to learn how to lead other men to Christ.

I shall never forget those Sunday mornings spent around the table with this consecrated layman at the head of the table teaching us, largely from the Scriptures, how we could become personal workers. In the afternoon, we all attended the men's meeting in the Y. M. C. A. and there mingled among the men trying to put into practise what we had been learning.

That Sunday-morning Bible class taught by a layman, together with the men's meeting in the afternoon, has colored all of

my preaching and has had not a little to do with keeping me interested in personal work.

When I went to the seminary a long time after that, I was very much surprised to find that there was no course in the seminary which taught young ministers how to do personal work. Two of the members of the faculty readily agreed that it was a blunder and such a course ought to be instituted, but outside of one which I taught myself at the invitation of the students, there was no such course offered, and, so far as I know, there are many seminaries in which one of the most important parts of training for ministerial life is neglected.

In the Young Men's Christian Association work which I entered I had great pleasure in teaching a class of this type myself, and here in my own pastorate I have had at various times the privilege of conducting classes of men and women during my ministry, and in that way have very materially developed the evangelistic spirit in the church.

I have found that there is a great need for this sort of work, so much so that at

Winona Lake one year I taught a class of several hundred ministers on this subject, and in our own City of Indianapolis I had the privilege one year of teaching it to a group of ministers representing all denominations.

Just why it is that so many ministers especially are not developing their people along this line, is more than I can understand, and yet, I am quite sure that it is a serious blunder. Many times I have been asked to put into print the series of lessons which I have given, but have never felt that they were well enough developed to do that. In this chapter, however, I am going to give an outline of these lessons and perhaps it may prove helpful to some one who will follow up the suggestion and organize a class in his own church.

The lessons, as one can readily see, are very simple and there are not very many of them. Any pastor or consecrated layman could readily take an outline like the one suggested, fill it in himself, and use it with great success.

The following is the outline of lessons which I have used on personal work:

Lesson I

Personal Work

1. *What is personal work?* Under this heading the class discusses this question and each member of the class is asked to write a definition stating what he thinks personal work consists of.

2. *Is personal work difficult to do, and if so, why?* Personal work is sometimes difficult: (1) When men are not in fellowship with God. (2) When they are afraid of their fellow men. (Exod. 4: 1, 10-14.) (3) When men lack knowledge of the Scriptures which are able to make wise unto salvation. (4) When men lack faith in the ability of God to save those to whom they would otherwise speak.

3. *Personal work should not be difficult.* (1) We speak without difficulty on those subjects in which we are interested. (2) When we realize what personal work includes. (Note, it includes a multitude of things which are not usually thought of as coming under the head of personal work, such as invitations, correspondence, etc.)

(3) We are ambassadors for Christ. (2 Cor. 5: 20; Matt. 28: 18-20.)

4. *Is every Christian under obligation to do personal work, and if so, why?* (1) Because the Scriptures so teach. (2) Because it is one of the characteristics of the new life. (3) Because the practise of the early Christians showed they so understood Christ's teachings. (4) The practise of Christ himself. (5) Do we fail if we do not secure a confession of Christ?

Lesson II

Qualifications for Personal Work

1. *The divine nature* (a real experience of God in the soul.) (Gal. 5: 22, 23; John 15: 4, 5.)

2. *Gumption and tact.* "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Note Christ's example. (John 4.) Paul on Mars Hill. (Acts 17: 23.)

3. *A character above reproach.* (1 Tim. 4: 12, 16; Rom. 12: 1, 2.)

4. *Faith in four things.* (1) God's power to save all men. (2 Tim. 1: 8-12.) (2) The gospel as the message and *only* message of

salvation. (Rom. 1: 16; Acts 4: 12; 1 Cor. 1: 18.) (3) The Bible as God's revelation to men and his appointed instrument for reaching men. (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17; 2 Peter 1: 20, 21.) (4) Faith that all who come to Christ will be saved. (John 3: 16; Rom. 1: 16; John 5: 24, 40.)

Lesson III

Qualifications for Personal Work (Continued)

1. *Knowledge of the Scriptures.* This book teaches about man as well as about God. (1) Knowledge concerning sin. Sin is death. (Gen. 2: 17; Rom. 5: 12.) (2) Sin is hereditary and universal. (Ps. 51: 5; Rom. 3: 23; 1 John 1: 10.) (3) The Scriptures make known the symptoms of sin. (James 1: 14, 15; Jer. 17: 9.) (4) The result and penalty of sin. (Gen. 2: 17; John 3: 36.) (5) The remedy for sin. (John 1: 12; 3: 16; Acts 16: 31.) (Acquaintance with the word of God enables a man to diagnose sin and prescribe a remedy.)

2. *Prayer.* (1) To reveal our need of constant fellowship with Christ. (2) To

learn how the need may be met. (3) Confession of our own sins. (4) Wisdom.

Some suggestions about prayer: (1) Go to God alone. (Matt. 6: 5-8.) (2) Ask. (Matt. 7: 7.) (3) Have faith. (Mark 9: 22, 23.) (4) Pray with sincerity. (Luke 18: 9-14.) (5) Seek forgiveness. (Mark 11: 25, 26.) (6) Abide in Christ. (John 15: 7.)

3. *The Holy Spirit.* The Holy Spirit is not a qualification but he is the qualifier. (John 14: 16, 17; 16: 7-15; Luke 24: 48, 49; Acts 1: 8.) The Spirit of God: (1) Imparts boldness. (2) Revives memory. (3) Gives assurance. (4) Fills with spiritual power.

4. *Daily study of the word of God.* (2 Tim. 2: 15.) (1) Check up on our own lives. (2) Tune in our own spirits. (3) To fire up. "While I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue."

Lesson IV

Methods of Personal Work

The indirect method. (1) Invitations to church, Y. M. C. A. meetings, to hear the

preaching of the gospel. (2) Introductions. Read the story of Philip and Nathanael. By introductions is meant the introduction by the personal worker of a non-Christian to a Christian in the hope that perhaps the Christian is better able to handle the case. (3) Correspondence. By this is meant the writing of letters to those whom we are trying to reach and occasionally mentioning the necessity of relating one's life to Christ. (4) United prayer. One can hardly estimate the power of prayer when two or three concentrate and pray daily for some individual in whom all are interested. (5) Influence. Living consistently before those whom we wish to reach.

Lesson V

Methods of Personal Work (Continued)

The direct method. (1) Approach men discreetly. (Note Jesus' method of approach to the woman of Samaria.) (2) Have patience and perseverance. The spirit of desire should be so strong that one continues to pray and look for an opportunity

for years, if necessary. (3) Study the prospect in order to find a point of contact. Sometimes it is necessary to study a man for a long time before one finds the vulnerable point which will result in introducing the vital question of his relationship to Jesus Christ. (4) Use the word of God. It is not necessary to know many texts, but to have a few ready for use at any time. The Word of God is quick and powerful. (5) Keep clearly in mind that a new convert is never safe until he is in the church and connected with some form of Christian service.

Lesson VI

Studying Jesus as the Master Personal Worker

Read carefully John 4: 1-42. Note the physical condition of the Saviour, the character of the woman whom he approached, the fact that she was a member of a hated alien race, thoroughly prejudiced against the Jews, was blind spiritually, yet claimed Jacob as her father, was exceedingly sinful and was also acquainted with the leading

theological discussion of the day. Note again that she classed herself with those who worship God. Then note the Saviour's method of dealing with one who was callous, indifferent, worldly, and sinful. (1) He went out of his way to reach her. (2) He interviewed her alone. (3) He was not afraid to talk with one whom all religious people despised and neglected. (4) He opened the conversation naturally. (5) He aroused her curiosity. (6) Led naturally to a place where he could bare the sin of her life. (7) Convicted her of sin, yet in a delicate way. (8) Evaded compromises. (9) When the woman was anxious to know the truth, he revealed it to her.

The results of the interview: (1) The woman was converted and immediately confessed Christ. (2) Many heard her testimony and believed. (3) The disciples learned something about their Lord's passion for souls. (4) A revival resulted in the community.

Lesson VII

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch. (Acts 8: 4, 5, 26-40.) Any one who reads this

story will readily find an outline that will be full of interest in a class on personal work.

While I have not attempted to outline in full the material contained in these lectures, I am taking it for granted that any one interested can find plenty of material, and perhaps these outlines will merely prove to be suggestive.

Another course could be outlined on the interviews of Jesus. A study of the Gospels reveals the fact that Jesus Christ had twenty-one interviews with individuals. In my own opinion, I think that Jesus met in personal conversation every type of individual that we have to face today, and a study of Jesus as a personal worker would equip any man quite thoroughly to meet almost any one on the subject of personal religion.

Results of training-class work: In the first place, the result of the conduct of a training-class in the church is that all the members of the class are stimulated along the line of personal evangelism, and if this is accomplished, it does not make very much

difference what sort of course we use. The idea is to interest people in the glorious work of winning souls. Once they have an opportunity to do that kind of work and have felt the joy of it, I believe they will continue.

Then again, learning how to do it, becoming interested in it, means that the gospel will be carried into schools and homes and business places, in many instances reaching people who are not in the habit of attending church.

I remember one night a wealthy and influential lady of our church came to me and said: "I had a most delightful experience last night after the class. I remembered that one of the maids in my own home was not a Christian and I felt that after the lesson last night I ought to speak to her, and while I did so with great hesitancy and fear, I found her very open to my approach and, after about an hour of conversation, knelt with her in prayer and had the joy of hearing her pray for herself and say that she had accepted Jesus Christ as her personal Saviour."

And then again a training-class means

there is a group of men and women who are always ready for service when ever the pastor gives an invitation at a Sunday service.

I am quite sure that any visiting pastor in my pulpit giving the invitation at the close of the service inviting people to accept Jesus Christ, would find, should there be any response at all, that not one who had raised a hand for prayer, or stood up, could leave the church service without some one speaking to him and securing his name and address, and perhaps introducing him to the minister. This would happen though an invitation had not been given in the church services for many weeks. In other words, there is a large group of our church people who become interested and are on the watch for souls as soon as the minister begins to give an invitation.

This ought to be the condition of every church where the gospel of the Lord Jesus is preached.

VI

SOUL-WINNING PREACHING

I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him.

—*2 Tim. 1: 12.*

SOUL-WINNING PREACHING

THERE is a sense in which all preaching should be soul-winning preaching. In other words, every sermon ought to have in it that which would lead people to recognize their need of Jesus Christ and in some way present him as a Saviour of the world. But in speaking of soul-winning preaching, I want to speak especially about that kind of preaching which is necessary in all evangelistic effort, whether it be in the local church by the pastor, or whether it be by some one called in especially to help.

I believe there are some elements which enter into soul-winning preaching which differentiate it in a way from what might be called "instructional" preaching, which has to do particularly with teaching. Of course it hardly need be said to any minister of the gospel that any preaching with the soul-winning element in it would have to be prayerful preaching. In other words, the sermon which has the evangelistic note in it, that which I believe is calculated to

win men to Christ, ought to be born in prayer, worked out in prayer, and preached in the spirit of prayer. Indeed, I do not see how any minister of the gospel can expect to have his ministry honored by the winning of souls unless there is constantly in his mind the thought of those who are not in Christ and yet are members of his own congregation. If this is true, then he will be praying for them continually, and in the preparation of his sermons he will have some of these people in mind.

This brings me back to the idea I have suggested in a former chapter, namely, that of keeping always before us a list of those in whom we are interested. I believe that morning by morning a pastor, if he is a soul-winning preacher, will find himself praying by name for people in whom he is particularly interested. Very naturally then, in the preparation of a sermon which he hopes will be used to bring people to a decision, he will be thinking of some of these people, and in that sense the sermon will be worked out in prayer.

It is remarkable how much time Jesus gave to prayer and how his great sermons

were apparently prepared in a spirit of prayer. Take, for instance, the Sermon on the Mount, and remember that he spent a night in prayer before he enunciated those great truths which were to move the world.

Certainly no one could ever charge the apostles with not being men of prayer. Mr. Moody used to say that Jesus never taught any of his apostles to preach, but he did teach them to pray.

In the second place, I believe that all evangelistic preaching must be *positive preaching*. We are living in an atmosphere that is charged with skepticism, and for a long time we have had our gospel challenged by those who do not believe some of the things which we believe are fundamental to the gospel of Jesus Christ. In some instances our seminaries have graduated men whose minds have been filled with questionings, and very naturally the note they would sound would be a weak one.

The thing that differentiated Jesus from all the other preachers of his day was that he spake with authority. For that reason men were perfectly willing to listen to him. After Paul had his remarkable experience

of conversion, he went away to Arabia for three years before he started out on his missionary work. What happened there, we do not know. We do know that when he came back and began his ministry, he had the note of authority in it, and he undoubtedly was the greatest preacher of his day and generation; in some ways, I think, he was the greatest preacher of any day or any generation. But when Paul returned from Arabia, he could say with no uncertain emphasis, "I know whom I have believed."

I have sometimes wished that a good many of our preachers could go to Arabia, either stay there or come back with the same note of assurance which Paul had.

This note of assurance or authority is absolutely necessary not only in the preaching of the gospel, but also in the conduct of business life. When a salesman goes out upon the road, selling blankets for instance, and the customer asks him whether these blankets are all wool, it is not enough for him to say his employers say they are all wool, or that the tag states they are all wool, or that he thinks they are all wool.

The customer wants to know whether he can have the assurance that they are all wool without any question about it at all. As long as he is in doubt, he will never be able to sell goods successfully.

Many years ago, when I was a young man, just entering the ministry, I was invited one evening to a banquet in the Manufacturers Club of New York. The banquet was given under the auspices of the Y. M. C. A. On one side of me sat a minister of the gospel, much older than myself, who, at that time, was doing a remarkable piece of work in one of the hardest sections of New York City. Conversions in his church were frequent. On the other side of me sat a man, also a minister, who was located in a much better part of the city. He was also a remarkable preacher. In the course of the conversation, the latter said: "Our good friend John, there (pointing to the man who was at my right) just seems to have his church in a perpetual revival, but up at my church we don't know anything about a revival. My baptistery is as dry as Gideon's fleece. I can hardly remember when I have baptized any one. On

the contrary, his baptistery is being used all of the time."

I suspect the only thing that saved me from saying something which might have been improper was the fact that I realized I was much younger than either one of these men and that perhaps silence was best for me. But I could have said to this man whose baptistery was always dry, "If you preached the same sort of gospel with the same note of authority that our friend has, I am quite sure your baptistery would be used more often than it is."

The difference between those two men has been marked in all the years that have followed. One man is constantly criticizing people's theology, is a modernist of the most pronounced type, and the other man, now a teacher in one of our great schools in the south, is spending the sunset years of his life instructing young men in the things of Christianity and making a marvelous contribution to the lives of the students.

After all, there must be the note of authority if there is to be success in winning souls to Christ. People do not care so much about what we think, but they are

tremendously interested in what we know. We must be positive not only in announcing the great truths of Christianity, we must also be quite *positive in what we say about sin.* Whenever a man minimizes the doctrine of sin, he makes very little impression upon the people who are listening to him, and if there ever was a time in the history of the Christian church when the truth concerning sin and its penalty needed to be sounded out, it is now.

There are times in a minister's life when he thinks that he knows all about the lives of his people, and, therefore, he does not need to say very much about sin and its terrible effects. But any man who allows himself to get into that condition will never have a real message on the subject.

In the City of Minneapolis some years ago, on the first night that I gave an invitation in an evangelistic meeting, the first person to respond to the invitation and come down the aisle was a tall, dignified-looking man, perhaps well into middle life. Others followed, but that man stood out, of course, because of his personality.

After the service was over I asked the

pastor of the church who the man was, and he said: "Why, he has been a member of this church for years and years. He is a member of my Board of Trustees. I can't imagine why he came down the aisle tonight. Surely that man didn't need to do anything like that."

Very quickly I said to that pastor: "Don't you tell him that. The thing for you to do is to put your arm around his shoulder and tell him that was one of the finest things he ever did, because you do not know what was going on in that man's mind, nor do you know anything about his real condition in the sight of God. Help him, but do not in any sense let him think you thought it was unnecessary."

Within three days from that time I received a letter nearly a score of pages long from that man, in which he told me that while he had been a trustee for over twenty years, he had been living a life that was utterly inconsistent, not only with the church-membership but really with common decency. He said that his own wife had told him again and again that he ought not to be an officer in the church and she some-

times wondered if he had a right to church-membership. Of course, I was very grateful to learn that that night he had made a decision which I believe changed his life forever.

We need to be exceedingly positive on this matter of sin, for we never know what is going on in the lives of people.

In the city of Washington, D. C., one of the finest-looking young men I ever saw came to me and said, "I would like to become a Christian but I can't." When I asked him why, he said it was because he was a thief. I confessed it was a shock to me when he told me boldly that he was a thief, and I asked him, "What do you mean?"

He said, "I robbed my employer"; then he went on to tell me that this had happened several years before. He was no longer in the employ of this man, but in the employ of the government. "But," he said, "I stole from him and then covered up the books in such a way that I do not suppose it will ever be discovered, but the fact of it is always with me. Two or three times now I have wanted to stand up and confess

Christ, but I know I have no right to so long as I am the kind of man I am."

He wanted me to tell him what to do. I had to tell him very frankly that he must go back to his employer and confess his sin. He said, "I think he is the type of man who will put me in the penitentiary if he discovers it."

I told him he might better be inside the penitentiary with God than outside without God. I think I made the conditions rather hard because I wanted to test him out and find out whether he did have strength enough to face the issue. Then I asked him whether he thought he could pay the money back? He said he thought he could; that it would take him a year or two but he could pay it back. I suggested a plan whereby he could give notes to this man and tell him he could pay it back. I told him to go and see his former employer and tell him exactly what happened in the meeting, and that he wanted to become a Christian. After prayer, he went away but I could see there was a cloud over his face, and I knew he was wondering whether he could afford to do what I had told him.

I saw him in the audience the next night and, of course, was wondering what had happened, but I knew something had happened because he was the first man to confess Christ that night. He waited until every one else had gone, then came to me with a face that was radiant and said: "Well, I have got it all settled. My employer was very gracious to me; told me he was very sorry I had allowed myself to do this; that it might never have been discovered but I never could have forgotten it. I have arranged to pay him so much a month until it is all paid, so I thought I had a right to confess Christ tonight. If you think it is all right, I am coming into the church."

One never knows what is going on in the minds of the people in a congregation. For that reason, we must have an authoritative note that speaks without compromising on the subject of sin.

In the third place, all evangelistic preaching must be *practical preaching.* Within twenty-five or thirty minutes issues are being determined which will tell for time and for eternity. There are those listening

to us who may never hear the gospel again. There are those who may hear it many times again, but never be in the same attitude. There are those who are hungering to know the truth. There are those who know the truth but hardly know what to do about it. Therefore, all evangelistic preaching must be exceedingly practical so that a wayfaring man, though a fool, may not err in his perception of the truth. This means, of course, that theological terms ought to be avoided as much as possible and only the practical terms of the gospel be used. It means, again, that truth ought to be illustrated and our Lord is the great teacher along this line. All of the messages which he brought were thoroughly illustrated so the people understood clearly what he was talking about.

After a certain college crew had been very successful in winning the eight-oar race, a well-known athlete went to the coach and said, "What stroke is that you fellows row?" With a quizzical sort of a look on his face, the coach looked up and said, "We row to get there."

I suppose he meant by that that after all

it was not so much the kind of a stroke they were using as it was the spirit that was in the men, backed by muscle and brawn which enabled them to win the race.

The evangelistic preacher should be all the time pleading for a verdict. Every sentence that he uses ought to be one that would help the jury to understand more clearly the truth and persuade them to accept it.

Some years ago I used to go to Trenton, New Jersey, to speak in the Sunday afternoon men's meetings. These meetings were at that time the greatest men's meetings in the country. Speakers were secured from everywhere within a reasonable distance. One time, the Secretary of the Association told me this story. "We had Doctor —— here last year; of course, you know that he is one of the most eloquent preachers in America," and with this I agreed. He continued: "The house was packed with men, and I expected that many of them would make a decision for Christ that afternoon, for all of these men's meetings were supposed to be strictly evangelistic in character. The doctor preached one of the most

eloquent sermons I ever listened to, but it did not move a single man in that audience to raise his hand or stand up. Apparently, no impression was made. The invitation was given but it was a complete failure. I was so sure that he could make good, that I invited him again, and the second time he was even worse than the first time, because his sermon was not even eloquent; it was commonplace. Just recently I took another chance on him and had him here again. I never saw an audience so moved as they were that afternoon. He made a plea for the souls of men that was not only one of the most eloquent I ever heard, but one of the most moving. Men literally by the scores came forward confessing Christ that afternoon."

"After the meeting was over," said the Secretary, "I took him into my office and said to him, 'Doctor, will you tell me just what it is that enabled you to do what you did this afternoon? The first time you preached a most eloquent sermon, but nobody was moved to accept Christ. The second time, to be perfectly frank with you, I didn't think you were getting anywhere.

Today you moved that audience as it has never been moved in this theater."

In answer to this he told me the Doctor replied: "The first time I came here, knowing that this was one of the great meetings of the country, I think I was more concerned about making an impression upon men with my ability as a preacher than about winning men to Christ, and it was a failure. The second time, I found myself trying to feel the audience out and I felt at sea all through the address, and it was a failure. But, when I was invited the third time, I could hardly understand why you invited me, knowing the character of the meeting demanded evangelistic preaching, but I do not suppose that I ever put more thought and prayer into a sermon than I did into that one this afternoon, and I prayed God that even though I might be the most colossal failure you had ever had on the platform, some men might come to see Jesus Christ and want him. I suspect that is the reason the meeting went so well this afternoon."

In other words, the man came with a passionate desire for a verdict. He wanted

men to be saved, and God honors that kind of preaching.

In the next place, I believe that evangelistic preaching must be *personal preaching*. By this I do not mean that we shall single out individuals in the audience and preach to them, as ministers sometimes do, the sermon becoming so personal in character that not only the man but many of the audience know to whom the preacher is talking. The result in that case is an antagonism on the part of the man to whom the sermon is directed and sometimes it even drives people away from the congregation. What I mean is that we shall preach after the sermon is all over. Many times the most eloquent sermon is the one preached after the pastor has come down from the pulpit and is talking with individuals. Many times he can do more in five minutes with some individual as he preaches Christ to him than he can on the platform in many sermons.

Not only ought sermons to be preached to men on Sunday, but by personal preaching the pastor should go from time to time into the homes and offices of men, and there

preach to them in a way which wins their respect and love and, often, their acceptance of Jesus Christ.

I have said in another chapter of this book that there are twenty-one recorded interviews of Jesus Christ. It is rather remarkable that we cannot find twenty-one sermons of Christ anywhere. It would seem as though the Spirit of God placed more emphasis upon recording what Jesus said to individuals than he did upon the great sermons which Jesus preached to large audiences. The greatest sermon that was ever preached on regeneration was preached to an individual at night after the work of the day was done. The greatest sermon ever preached on the water of life was preached to an individual at a wellside at a time when the Saviour was tired with a long journey on a hot day. That was to one who was considered an outcast among men. Jesus seemed to enjoy talking to individuals. Surely we, as ministers of the gospel, ought to follow his example.

One of the finest men ever connected with our church was a very well-known physician. For years and years he had been

connected with the church and for many years he had been an officer in the church. He was always to be found at the morning service, evening service, and the prayer-meeting. Frequently he was in attendance upon the Bible school. He was well along in years when I first became acquainted with him, but I found him one of the most delightful personalities and earnest Christians that I have ever known. Over and over again at the close of a Sunday-night service, and sometimes at the close of a Sunday-morning service, when I have been greeting the people in front of the pulpit, I have seen this fine Christian physician, with his arm on the shoulder of some young man, and more than once I have heard him say: "My dear sir, the greatest thing in the world is to be a Christian. There isn't anything like it." I knew then that some young man was coming face to face with the claims of Christ upon his life.

I think we ministers make a great mistake when we imagine that because we have preached the sermon and the service is closed, that is the end of things. In many instances, that ought to be the be-

ginning of things. People are ripe then and perhaps ready to accept Christ even though they have had no manifestation of such a desire. Recently, after a Sunday-night service, two men came down to greet me, one of them a member of the church, and with him a friend. As this church-member met me, he said: "I want to introduce my friend So-and-so. I think he ought to come into the church very soon."

I looked at this young man and said to him: "I think that would be a very fine thing to do. Why don't you come next Thursday night to our deacons, accepting Christ as your Saviour, and come right into the church?" I wondered how he would take an abrupt approach like that and I was very much gratified to hear him say in a serious tone, "I will be glad to think that over very seriously and I may come next Thursday night." And he came.

Some of the richest experiences in my ministerial life have been along the line of personal preaching. I remember very distinctly a man who was the head of an insurance company of our city, one of the most respected and best-known men in the

city. He had two children just about the age when they ought to be coming into the church. His wife was a member of the church. I felt that he ought to be reached in order to reach the children, and that he really should lead them into the church. He was inclined to be very friendly to me and many times invited me to take lunch with him at his favorite club. He will never know how many times I went to lunch with him when I felt I could hardly spare the time, but I went because I wanted to keep in close contact with him, and I was waiting for an opportunity to speak to him about his soul.

Finally I thought the time was about ripe, and so one day I went down to his office and asked if I could see him privately for a few moments. He was most gracious and took me into his private office. I asked him if he would mind locking the door, for I didn't want to be disturbed. He sent word to his secretary not to allow any one to come in. Then he looked up at me with a smile and said, "You must have something mighty important to talk about this morning." I said: "It is the most impor-

tant thing that I ever talk about. I want to know if you won't accept Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and come into the church?"

"Well," he said, "that is important, I suppose, and I will think that over."

"No," I said, "you have been thinking it over for about forty years, but you haven't got anywhere on that program." Then I reminded him of his two beautiful children; how I knew they would come but I felt he ought to lead them. He tried to evade me by saying that his mother was a member of another denomination and he did not think she would like to have him become a Baptist. I said, "All right, will you sit right down here now and dictate a letter to your mother and tell her that you have been thinking about going into this church but you felt perhaps she might not wish you to go into the Baptist church and you would like to know what she thinks about it?"

Of course, I knew that he would not do that, and he smiled as he said, "Well, maybe it won't be necessary." In a few moments, after much serious conversation, I had the privilege of looking that man

squarely in the eyes as he stood up and took me by the hand and said, "I will accept Christ as my Saviour." He came into the church, and his children came into the church. He became an officer in the church for a number of years and one of the most faithful.

I am thinking of another man whose wife was a member of the church and a most active one. He always attended church with her, but he never could be persuaded to confess Christ. His wife urged me to try to get him to take that stand, but she said: "I am afraid he is almost hopeless; because he is such a good man he doesn't see the need of going further in this matter."

I kept closely in contact with that man for about two years, and then one day when I felt that the time was ripe, I went down to his store and strangely enough, it was the busiest time during the day, when he was directing the affairs of a large business. I felt rather foolish as I went in because I felt: "Why this is most inopportune. He will be so busy we can't talk about serious things now." Yet, I had the feeling

that I ought to speak. As soon as he saw me, he came to me at once and said, "Well, Pastor, what can I do for you?"

I said, "I want to ask you a question, and I want a straight out-and-out answer at once." "All right," he said, "what is it?" Of course, he never dreamed what that question was going to be,

"I want to know," I said, "if you will accept Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and do it right here and now?"

He looked at me in amazement and then he said, "Do you mean to tell me that I could do anything like that right here?" I said: "You can do it right here and now if you will. You know enough to do it. All you need to do is to act upon what you already know. If you will take Christ as your personal Saviour will you take me by the hand and say, 'I will'?"

"Do you mean to tell me I can do it right here in this store, now?"

He hesitated a moment, gripped my hand hard, and said, with a voice that carried conviction, "I will."

I said: "All right. Now then, I want to ask you one other thing. Will you come

Thursday night to the Board of Deacons and tell them you have accepted Christ and want to come into the church?"

"Oh," he said, "I do not think I can do that. It will take some time for me to get ready for that." I said, "No, you are ready right now." A few moments' conversation led him to see he could do it, and so he said, "Well, if you will be there and help me through if I get into trouble, I will come."

That man today is a most useful member of our church and has been a trustee for a good many years.

I believe one of the greatest joys of a minister's life is found in doing just the kind of work which I am suggesting, and this is what I mean by personal preaching.

In the next place, evangelistic preaching must be *persuasive preaching*. It must have what Doctor Jowett has so well called "the character of winsomeness." We are to win men to Christ. Every evangelistic sermon must have that spirit which will persuade men to see the truth and be willing to accept it.

Of all the ministers that I have ever

heard, I never knew a man who had this character so pronounced in his preaching as did Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, of sainted memory. Every sermon ought to leave men feeling a desire to be better in their lives. It ought also to move them to some act in life that would show that they had received something that was worth while.

This idea of persuasiveness in preaching perhaps can be illustrated by something which took place in the life of Doctor Chapman when he was the pastor of the Fourth Presbyterian Church in New York City. At that time, he had a young man as a secretary who afterward became my musical director, and it is to him that I owe this story. He told me that one day when Doctor Chapman and he were on their way down-town, they were on an elevated train which was so crowded that people had to stand. "The man standing in front of Doctor Chapman and holding onto a strap," said my friend, "kept looking at the doctor and finally touched him and said, 'Excuse me, isn't this Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman?' Doctor Chapman immediately arose and said, 'Yes.' 'You don't know me,' he said,

'but I come to your church quite frequently on Sunday evenings, and I want to have the privilege of telling you how much I enjoy your sermons. They always help me, and I think I am a better man for having heard you.'"

Of course, any minister would be glad to hear anything of that kind. "So," said my friend, "Doctor Chapman said, 'I am very glad indeed to hear you say that. Are you a member of any church?' 'No sir, I am not.' 'Well, are you a Christian?' 'No,' he said, 'I am not.'"

Then my friend said Doctor Chapman put his hand on his shoulder in the crowded elevated car and said: "You have pleased me very much by what you have said, but I wish you were a Christian man. If I could tell you what Jesus Christ means to me in my daily life, I feel quite sure you would be glad to accept him as your Saviour and love him and serve him. I hope the day is not far distant when you are going to do it."

That was all he said. My friend added, "I noticed the man was touched and simply muttered, 'Thank you.'"

A few weeks after that, this man came before the session of Doctor Chapman's church and said: "I would like to unite with the church. I believe I have accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour. I have heard a good many sermons by your own pastor here, but I never heard a sermon that moved me to see my need and to have a desire to be a Christian like the little sermon that he uttered when he spoke to me on an elevated train one morning. I went away saying to myself that morning, 'If any man is as deeply desirous of seeing me become a Christian as he seemed to be when he spoke to me, it is about time I began to think of my own soul.' That is what led me to an acceptance of Christ."

That is what I mean by persuasive preaching and winsome preaching, preaching that has the spirit of love in it, that leads men to realize as never before their need of Christ and the beauty of the Christian religion.

The best compliment that a minister ever receives, is not when some one says that "That is the greatest sermon I ever listened to," or, "I never heard you preach better,"

but when some one passes the pulpit and in a trembling voice says, "I want to be better after what I heard this morning." In the last analysis, sermons are to make people better.

As I bring these words to a close, I could heartily wish that all evangelistic work which I have ever done had always been done in a spirit which I am trying to suggest in this chapter. I am perfectly conscious of the many, many failures I, myself, have made, but on general principles, I should say that the elements which I have been suggesting here must be in all evangelistic preaching, and every preacher ought to have a passionate desire to be a soul-winning preacher.

VII

SOUL-WINNING: A PRIVILEGE AND AN OBLIGATION

They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

—Daniel 12: 3.

SOUL-WINNING: A PRIVILEGE AND AN OBLIGATION

The winning of souls is not only a privilege but an obligation which rests upon every member of the kingdom of God. Many Christians have sought to excuse themselves from this form of service on the ground that only those who have been specially called and equipped for it can do it. The fact remains, however, that the teaching of the Old and New Testaments clearly indicates that every one who has had experimental knowledge of Christ and his salvation is under obligation to make him known to all men.

The spirit of the man who feels no obligation to spread the news of salvation is the spirit of the one who said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The spirit of the genuine child of God, one who has had an experience of divine grace, is the spirit of desire to have others share this same blessing. The first recorded prayer in the Bible is the prayer of an anxious father for his

son: "Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!" Later on, when this same man prayed earnestly that the doom of Sodom might be averted, he undoubtedly had in mind the family of Lot. He was deeply concerned lest those who were dear to him might perish, and this is the spirit of every genuine child of God.

David promises the Lord that as soon as he is restored to fellowship with him he will "teach transgressors thy ways," and then he adds, "Sinners shall be converted unto thee." The writer of the Proverbs says, "He that winneth souls is wise;" and Daniel tells us that "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

When we turn to the pages of the New Testament, this teaching is clearer still. Jesus says, "Follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men"; and all through his life he emphasizes the obligation of men to seek and to save their fellow men. Indeed, his last words are an indication of how he holds us responsible for the salvation of our fellows:

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

These last words of our Lord constitute a commission to all Christian men and women everywhere. What Jesus said to that group of disciples on Olivet he says to us today, and every Christian who reads this must certainly feel a responsibility upon himself to help fulfil the requirements of the commission.

James says: "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

John closes the last book in the New Testament by emphasizing this duty: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come."

It does not seem possible for any one to read the Bible and not feel a sense of responsibility for personal work. Not only do the Old and New Testaments and the teaching of Christ reveal this obligation, but the lives of the early Christians show

that they so understood the teaching and obeyed it.

The first chapter of John's Gospel has been called the "Finder's Chapter." When John the Baptist found the Messiah he went about, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Two of the men who heard John followed Jesus and accepted him as their Lord. One of these was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. As soon as Andrew found Jesus he hurried out to find Peter, and brought him to Jesus. The next day Jesus found Philip, and Philip became a disciple. Philip hurried out and found Nathanael, and said, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph." Nathanael expressed some doubt of this, and Philip quietly said, "Come and see"; and Nathanael came and saw, and surrendered his life to Christ. When the Gadarene demoniac was healed, Jesus sent him back to his village to tell the story of his wonderful cure.

An outcast woman meets Jesus at the well, and as soon as she comes to know him

as her Lord she hurries back into the village, gathers a group of folks about her, and says to them, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did"; and because of her testimony they go to see the Christ, and a revival of religion takes place in that community. This is the constantly repeated story of the New Testament. As soon as men experienced Christ's salvation they went out to tell others about it.

But we see our responsibility, not only as emphasized in the teaching of the Old and New Testaments and the experience of the early disciples, but also as it is clearly set forth in the example of our Lord.

John says, "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." If we give ourselves to follow in the footsteps of our Lord, we shall soon be speaking to individuals about his salvation; for Jesus was not only a preacher to the multitude, he spent much time in talking to individuals. Indeed, some of the greatest sermons he ever preached were spoken to individuals.

The great sermon on "Regeneration" was preached to one man late at night. The

marvelous sermon on " The Water of Life " was preached to an outcast Samaritan woman beside a village well. While few of the sermons of Jesus have been recorded, the Spirit of God has thought it worth while to preserve twenty-one personal interviews which Jesus had with all sorts of men and women.

Still further, to the teaching of the Old and New Testaments and the experiences of the early disciples and the example of our Lord we must add our own experience. How did we come to know Christ as our Lord? I venture to say that in the vast majority of cases we were led to see our need by the testimony of some individual. We may have decided to confess Christ under the preaching of a sermon, or the exhortation of some Christian worker; but what preceded that? In the experience of most of us, it was the personal touch of some one who was a faithful witness for Christ, and we think with gratitude of that soul who lovingly set before us the claims of Christ upon our lives.

If some one has been kind enough to bring the message of Christ's salvation to

us, shall we selfishly appropriate it, and carelessly forget those who need what we have? God forbid! But if we are clearly under obligation to witness for Christ, why is it that so many of us fail to do it? It may be because we have a wrong idea of what is expected of us. Many good men and women think that personal work means the ability to take a person into a corner, and there with open Bible meet all of his objections and arguments against Christianity, and convince him that he should yield to Christ. This is not true. It is not at all what Jesus had in mind. It is not what the New Testament disciples did.

What Jesus had in mind was that when we come to experience his glorious salvation, we should be so filled with joy that we would naturally and gladly tell others what he has done for us, and this would make them want what he has to give.

Perhaps we are hindered by the fact of our inconsistent lives. David felt this. He knew that he could not lead others so long as sin was at work in his soul. "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit: then will I

teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

A young man who was much interested in some meetings that were being held in an Eastern city came to the pastor one night and said, "Pastor, I could not do any personal work last night." "Why not?" "Well, all the time you were preaching there was a piece of white flannel before me." The pastor looked at him curiously, and he explained. He said: "I am employed in a large wholesale cloth house. Sometimes we have short pieces of goods left after orders are completed, and once in a while a man will take one of these ends home. Nothing much is thought of it, but of course it is not right. Not long ago I took home a piece of white flannel. I never realized what that really meant until last night, and then the Spirit of God revealed the sin of it to my soul. I hurried home after service, and found the flannel. I told my wife what was in my mind, and she agreed with me that I must take it back. I went to my employer this morning and told him the story, and said, 'You may do as you please with me, but I want your

forgiveness.' My employer thanked me, forgave me, and then said, 'Now you may take this flannel back home, and keep it as a souvenir.' Now I believe I am ready for work, and I can honestly urge other men to come to Christ, because my own life is clean." That young man's experience may not be ours, but undoubtedly many a man's mouth is sealed by the knowledge that his life is not consistent.

We cannot expect to have a vital interest in the souls of our fellow men, if we have lost all sense of personal, daily experience of God's grace. Some people excuse themselves from witnessing for Christ because they say they do not know the Bible well enough. This is, of course, an excuse, and not a reason. Even a little knowledge of the word of God will equip us for witnessing. In the conduct of hundreds of after-meetings, and in dealing with thousands of inquirers, the writer has found it necessary to use only a few passages of Scripture. A limited acquaintance with the Bible will enable one who really wants to win others to do royal service for Christ.

The real question is not whether we are

naturally diffident or whether we know enough of the word of God, but whether we are seeking daily the fellowship with our Lord that gives us a genuine experience of his grace. Such an experience will lead us naturally and lovingly to seek to win others. We shall never feel free from responsibility. We shall realize their need, appreciate their danger, and we shall long to save them from death. When one thinks of the appalling need for this kind of work, he cannot but wonder how it is that so many are carelessly, almost criminally, negligent. When we are told that seventy-five per cent. of the young men of America never enter a church door from one year to another, we realize that some one besides the pastor must reach these men, if they are ever to be saved. The world will never be won to Christ so long as the members of the church fail to carry the gospel message outside of the church edifice.

The pastor of every church needs men and women who, after hearing the sermon on Sunday, will carry its message to those who never attend the services. At a conference of business men one day, the ques-

tion was discussed, How can we increase the attendance at the Sunday-evening service? One after another the men expressed themselves. One said that more advertising will attract folks; another suggested special musical attractions; another thought that the way to get folks out to the service was to announce popular subjects; finally a lawyer, the leading counsel for one of our great railroads, said, "I think all of the suggestions are good, but in my opinion, if each one of us here would think of some friend who does not attend church, would call him on the phone before the service, and say we wanted the pleasure of his company for the evening, and then would bring him to church, we should solve this problem." And he was right. When the men in our churches realize their responsibility for their fellow men, they will reach thousands of men who do not attend any service now. Then, when one considers the rich reward which comes to those who win their fellow men, it is very strange that more men do not seek it. One who has felt the thrill of leading a man to Christ, will feel constrained to seek others.

When Henry Drummond was at Northfield some years ago, urging men to lead others to Christ, he said: "Begin with individuals; give your life for a life. I recall a specific incident, the case of a man whom I shall never forget to my dying day. One night I received a letter from one of the students of the University of Edinburgh, page after page of agnosticism and atheism. I went over to see him, and spent a whole afternoon with him, making not the slightest impression. At Edinburgh University we have a students' evangelistic meeting Sunday nights, at which there are eight hundred or one thousand men present. A few nights after this, that man was in the meeting, and next to him sat another man whom I had seen occasionally at the meetings. I did not know his name, but I wanted to find out more about my skeptic, so when the meeting was over I went up to him, and said, 'Do you happen to know Boyce?' 'Yes,' he replied, 'it is he that brought me to Edinburgh.' 'Are you an old friend?' I asked. 'I am an American, a graduate of an American University; after I had finished there I wanted to take

a post-graduate course, and finally decided to come to Edinburgh. In the dissecting-room I happened to be placed next to Boyce, and took a singular liking to him. I found out that he was a man of remarkable ability, though not a religious man, and I thought I might be able to do something for him. A year passed, and he was just where I found him.' 'I think you said,' I resumed, 'that you only came here to take a year of the post-graduate course?' 'Well,' he said, 'I packed my trunks to go home, but thought of this friend, and I wondered whether a year of my life would be better spent to go and start in my profession in America, or to stay in Edinburgh and try to win that one man for Christ; and I stayed.' 'Well,' I said, 'my dear fellow, it will pay you; you will get that man.' Two or three months passed, and it came to the last night of our meetings. We have men in Edinburgh from every part of the world. Every year, five or six hundred of them go out never to meet again, and in our religious work we get very close to one another, and on the last night of the year we sit down together in our common hall.

This is entirely a students' meeting. On that night there are present the members of the theological faculty. Hundreds of men are there, the cream of the youth of the world. Many of them are not members of the church, but are there for the first time pledging themselves to become members of the kingdom of God. I saw Boyce sitting down beside his American friend. He had got his man. A week after he was back in his own country. I do not know his name; he made no impression in our country, nobody knew him. He was a subject of Christ's kingdom, doing his work in silence and in humility. A few weeks passed and Boyce came to see me. I said, 'What do you come here for?' He replied, 'I want to tell you I am going to be a medical missionary.' It was worth a year, was it not?"

Surely we agree that that American student multiplied his life by that one year's consecrated effort.

James says that when we do our part, we "save a soul from death." But suppose we fail? Is it not true that thousands of men and women might be reached for

Christ if it were not for our indifference, our inconsistent living, our lack of appreciation of what Christ has done for us?

The writer can never forget an incident which happened in his ministry some years ago: A man who had been a great sinner, a prodigal, came back home, all broken with disease and sin; in many ways he was the hardest man to approach that I have ever known. His own family could not go into the room because of the way in which he spoke to them. His mother was the only one who had any influence with him, and she was afraid to let me see him. Finally I persuaded her to admit me to his room, and I saw him several times. He did not know that I was a minister. They operated on him several times, but it was impossible to save him. Finally they told him who I was, but he would not let any one speak to him on the subject of religion. One Sunday morning after service his brother came to me and said, "My brother came very near dying last night, and remarked, 'If I live till morning, I would like to see the pastor.'" I said that I would go over late in the afternoon, as I had a service imme-

diately after dinner. The brother replied: "You need not come today; the doctor says he will last for some time now." I started to keep my appointment to preach, but an impression came, which deepened and deepened. "You had better go and see Mr. ——." It seemed impossible in view of the preaching engagement. Just as I was about to step on the car to go to the service, the impression seemed overwhelming. "You had better go and see Mr. ——." I believed that it must be the voice of the Spirit of God, and I hurried to his home. He received me cordially, and quickly I told him that I had wanted to speak to him about his soul, but had never had the opportunity. Now I must speak. I told him of God's great love for sinful men. He listened carefully. I quoted Paul's words: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (Rom. 10: 10, 11). And I said: "Will you take Jesus now as your Saviour? If so, take me by the hand, and say, I will." There was a moment's strug-

gle, then he took my hand and said, "I will." Then he burst into tears, and I saw that God had entered his soul. We had a word of prayer, and then, as I stood in the doorway ready to go, I said, "It's all right now, is it?" His face was radiant as he said, "Yes, it is." Then I said, "If I should not see you again and anything should happen, you will be all right?" "Yes," he said quietly, "if I do not see you here, I am sure that I will see you in heaven." He was marvelously converted. I went away to my appointment rejoicing. As I entered my home late that afternoon, my wife said to me, "Did you hear the news about Mr. ——?" "No; what news?" "He died ten minutes after you left." Suppose I had not obeyed that impression?

VIII

WHY WE FAIL

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

—*Ps. 139: 23, 24.*

WHY WE FAIL

THIS text of Scripture marked an epoch in my religious experience on the occasion of my first visit to Northfield. I had been engaged in Christian work about a year, and I was thinking about my vacation, when a friend suggested a trip to Northfield. I agreed to go, and together we boarded the boat that was to take us to New London. We found about two hundred college men on the boat, all bound for the college conference, which was to convene at Northfield the next day. I shall never forget the enthusiasm of the men as they sang college songs during the earlier hours of the evening; nor the spiritual blessing that came to us when darkness came over the water and our minds took on a more serious turn as the songs were changed to hymns of praise and devotion. It was a new experience and calculated to make a man feel glad that he was a Christian, and we retired with a feeling of joy in our hearts.

We arrived safely and were assigned to

a little tent on the hillside. That night the hall was filled when the services began, and the singing of the hundreds of college men, gathered from all parts of the world, was inspiring. Finally the man around whom Northfield centered stood up and announced as his text for the evening sermon the one which I have just quoted. Step by step he led us to see the need of a pure life, and as he spake the Spirit of God searched the hearts of the men present. When Mr. Moody closed his sermon every man there felt as though he had seen the Lord, and like one of old wanted to cry out: "Woe is me! for I am undone." I got a vision of myself that night that made me want to be alone with God, for I felt if any man in that audience needed cleansing I was that man. When I arrived at our tent I found that my chum had preceded me and was on his knees pouring out his soul to God, and asking for pardon and cleansing. Together we bowed and sought the Lord and confessed our sins, and together we rose up to be different men, because of that sermon.

I believe that before any great revival will come to our churches we, who are in

the church, will have to seek purification from our own sins. I should like to write in letters of fire above the pulpit one sentence, and it would read like this: "Why am I not more used of God?" Is it not true that we are conscious of our lack of power? Is it not also true that every one of us greatly desires, above everything else in the world, to be used of God? Then, if these things are true, are we willing to let God deal with us as he will? Are we willing now to say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"? If we are, I believe that some of us may do great things for our God.

What are some of the things which hinder the work of God in our lives? First of all there is *hidden or unconfessed sin.* All sin is open to the eyes of God, but it is possible that one may have something in his life which prohibits any large work being done through him. The world knows nothing about it. His friends know nothing about it, and perhaps it happened so long ago that he imagines that it is all done away with. But

no man can expect power with God until all of his sin has been put away forever.

And more than this, one man may be the cause of the powerlessness of a whole church. The people of God had crossed the river; they had gone against Jericho and won the battle, and now they go against a little insignificant place called Ai, and to their surprise they are defeated by a mere handful of men. Joshua was discouraged, and, going before the Lord, he asked for the meaning of this shameful failure. Then God told Joshua that sin was in the camp, and because of this the whole people of Israel were without power. Only one man had sinned, but one man had prevented the thousands from gaining the victory. You may think that your sin is only a little thing, but sin in any form is hideous in the eyes of the Lord, and no man can have power with God while unconfessed sin is in his life.

I remember a man in a New Jersey city. He was for a time a most earnest worker in the Y. M. C. A. of that city, but after a time the secretary noticed that this man did not attend the meetings and that he

had lost his interest in the work of saving young men. He spoke to him about it and the man acknowledged that he had lost interest, but said that he could not account for it. The secretary had a number of conversations with him and finally told him that he was quite sure that there was something in his life that was sinful. After a while the man acknowledged that frequently, when riding on the cars to and from business during the rush hours, the conductor did not see him, and he was in the habit of keeping his fare. You may smile at that, because many of us know only too well how much of that sort of thing is being done. But you know what that young man was doing: he was selling his soul for five cents a day. He had lost fellowship with God and power with men for a few paltry cents. Like many others, he had thought that stealing from a corporation was different than stealing from an individual, but in the Word of God stealing is stealing, whether it is from companies or individuals. It may not be this in your life which is keeping back the power of God, but whatever it is let us say manfully, honestly,

" God helping me, I here and now renounce all sin."

Another thing which prevents us from being used of God is *a spirit of unwillingness to be where God can use us.* We want to go to certain fields and do certain kinds of work, and because we like this or that sphere of activity we are apt to make ourselves believe that this is the will of God for us. When a man is filled with the Spirit of God he will be glad to go where God wants him to go. I have a friend who is in the ministry and who located in a hard field. Some time ago he became discouraged and made up his mind to seek another field. He asked his friends to write to a number of churches for him, but although he was invited to preach in some of them he was not called. One day, while thinking it all over, the thought came to him that perhaps he had not filled to the full the cup of service which had been given to him, and he went home, and entering the room where his wife was sitting he took off his coat and said to her, " Wife, I want you to hold that coat for about three years." His wife looked up in surprise and said, " What do

you mean?" "Just what I said," he replied. "I want you to hold that coat for about three years. I have made up my mind that God wants me to stay here, and I am going to work to show him what I can do, and for three years I am going to work as I have never worked before." His wife smiled at his way of putting it, but she knew he was in earnest. Since that time that church has made wonderful progress, and not long ago that man had the blessed privilege of receiving into the church, on confession of faith, his two sons. It pays to stay where God wants us to stay. Why are you not more used of God? Perhaps this is the reason. Can we all say it now? "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

But still another thing which is keeping many from being used of God is the fact that *some are cherishing bitter feelings against others.* One of the saddest things in the world is the fact that some of those who claim to be followers of Jesus allow themselves to cherish evil feelings against

others for either real or fancied wrongs. If there is any one thing clearly taught and emphasized by the Master it is that a man who has a heart filled with bitterness cannot be used of him, and in fact cannot have fellowship with him. No man can pray the Lord's Prayer through without bringing a reproach upon his head if he is holding a grudge against any other man. "Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors" are the words of the prayer, and hundreds of people pray that prayer daily whose hearts are in such a condition that nothing but the displeasure of God can rest upon them until they have the spirit of forgiveness.

Some time ago I was preaching in a series of meetings, and one night among those who sent requests for prayer to the platform was a woman who asked that we join her in prayer for her son. I learned afterward that he was an only son and was just about to be graduated from a law school. The pastor told me, however, that this mother was very bitter toward one of the members of the church. That night I told the people that a heart filled with bit-

terness was a sure cause of failure to have our prayers answered, and that lady went home very angry. The pastor did all he could to make her understand her sinfulness, but she would always reply, "I will never forgive that woman!" As the meetings continued her bitterness seemed to increase, and she could not sleep. Finally the last night of the meetings came and her son was still out of the kingdom. That night the pastor's wife watched for her, and at the close of the meeting asked her to come into the pastor's study and meet the woman toward whom she felt so bitter, and settle the matter. After considerable persuasion she did so, and the pastor knelt and prayed, and then both women arose, kissed each other, and sought forgiveness.

In the meantime I was conducting the after-meeting, and the first man to accept Christ that night was the son of the woman who had allowed the sin of bitterness to keep her from the joy of the Lord. The very moment she got right with God, God gave her her son. The Spirit of Jesus Christ is the spirit of love, and the man who has a feeling of bitterness in his heart cannot

be used of his Lord. A bitter heart will always hinder the work of God's spirit in the church, and more than one church is absolutely without saving power because some of the members have quarreled and allowed the matter to remain unsettled. If there is in your heart any feeling of bitterness toward another man or woman, kneel down before you sleep and ask God to give you grace, and then write the letter that will make your enemy your friend and give you peace with God.

There are many who cherish evil against their brethren, but there are many more who are powerless because of *a spirit of indifference to the condition of the lost.* In one of the finest passages of the Old Testament, at a time when the land was ringing with songs of praise for the victory God had given his people, we find a sentence in the song of triumph which seems strange. In the song of Deborah, after telling of the mighty exploits of the hosts of God, she cried out: 'Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of Jehovah, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not . . . to the help of Jehovah against the mighty."

The great sin of Meroz was the sin of indifference. When the fight was on and every man was needed, Meroz remained idle, caring nothing about the issues of the battle. The great sin of the church today is the sin of indifference. Men are so busy about the things of this world, buying and selling, getting gain and living in luxury, that the work of saving the lost is a matter of no concern to them. I believe if there is any one thing that must cause the angels to weep and the Son of man to be filled with sorrow it is that the people to whom he has entrusted the work of saving lost men and women are perfectly indifferent to the condition of those who are sinking down to darkness and despair. Jesus could stand the awful agony of the cross, and when the cruel nails were driven through his hands and feet, when the spear was thrust into his side, we hear no murmur of complaint; but when he stood over Jerusalem and saw the iniquity of the city, when he realized that the people of God were not concerned about the condition of their own city, he was moved to tears.

I believe that God will take an ignorant man and use him mightily for the salvation of men if he is in earnest. I believe that those who blunder and who seem to have no tact in winning men to God will be excused for their blunders and even used to do great things for God; but I am sure that the indifferent man will have a fearful hour awaiting him at the judgment-seat of God, when he faces those with whom he dwelt on earth and might have won for Christ, but whom he never told of their lost condition. When friends and relatives and business associates and all of those to whom he might have spoken the word of life rise up before him and condemn him for his lack of interest in their souls, I believe he will be filled with remorse and will yearn for an opportunity to go back and live his life over again.

Are we true to the trust our Saviour has committed unto us? Have we told lost men and women of the blessings which we enjoy in the Christian life, or have we allowed pride and conventionality to enter in and blunt our sense of responsibility so that today we are indifferent to the claims of God

upon us to win men for his Son? Can we say it now? Shall we say it with all our hearts? "Search me, O God, . . and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

And now let me close by saying that one other reason why many of us are not more used of God is found in the fact that *we lack the power of the Holy Spirit.* When Jesus was about to leave the disciples he said to them, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." The record of the book of Acts is a record of the work of the Holy Spirit through men wholly surrendered to Jesus Christ. Is it not true that the church of Christ lacks power? And it is not because many of us who are ministers of the gospel have been content to work without the power that may be had when we are completely surrendered to the will of God? We have the most intellectual ministry that the world has ever known. We have the best-equipped churches that we have ever had; there are more Christians than ever before, and yet the church of God lacks

power to turn back the tide of unbelief and worldliness that is sweeping over the world. I believe that the time has come for us to examine our methods, to search our lives and see whether we have not forgotten that it is not by might or by power, but by the Spirit of God that the work of winning a lost world to Christ is to be accomplished.

We believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every man that believes. We believe that men are lost for time and eternity unless they have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. But when we can also say with the same earnestness, we believe in the Holy Spirit, there will be conviction of sin, and whether men turn to God or not we shall be conscious that we have declared the word of God in power, and this is all that God asks us to do, and it may be that we shall have the joy of hearing men cry out, "What must we do to be saved?" May every one of us be so filled with the Spirit of God that those with whom we come in contact shall take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus and learned of him.

IX

HARVEST-TIME

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

—*John 4: 35.*

HARVEST-TIME

The story of the interview with the woman at the well at Samaria is one of the most fascinating of the interviews which Jesus had with individuals. Perhaps there is no place in the Gospels where an illustration of personal work can be found that is better than this one. I am not speaking on this occasion of personal work, but rather on the idea of some things which take place in a harvest in the spiritual world which have their analogy in the harvest of the natural world. You will remember, of course, that Jesus was tired and weary with the journey, the day was warm, and it was the most natural thing in the world for him to desire a drink of water. It was not at all natural, however, for a Jew to ask a drink of a Samaritan, and the woman called his attention to this fact.

He was alone because his disciples had gone into the village to buy food. When he saw this woman who had come there from the village in order to procure water,

he asked her in the most natural way for a drink of water, and in the conversation which follows, he led her to the place where he could reveal to her the possibility of having water that springeth up unto eternal life. The end of the interview is that the woman accepts Christ as her Saviour and Lord and hurries away to the people of her community with the glad news of the joy which is filling her heart.

While she is away, and before she has returned with the group of men who came to see the One who had given her such joy, the disciples returned. They had been into the little village to procure food for the group, and very naturally they speak to Jesus about the taking of food. Then he utters these words:

I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?

Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

Of course, we know that he was not speaking of a harvest in the natural world, but of the harvest which he already saw that was going to come to pass in the spiritual world. This poor outcast woman would carry to the little village of Samaria the story of the possibility of salvation, and he knew perfectly well that that story would result in the opening of the minds of the people, and in the harvest of which she would be the first-fruits.

It seems to me that the lesson which our Lord endeavors to teach is that at all times, if one has eyes to see, there are harvests to be gathered in the spiritual world.

I want to speak for a little time on the analogy that exists between the harvest in the natural world and the harvest in the spiritual world. It is a natural thing for a harvest to come in the spiritual world. We should be very much disappointed if after weeks and months of patient toiling and sowing there should never come a reaping-time. Pastors would be discouraged, Sunday-school teachers would lose their interest, and the work of the church in general would become very drab and common-

place; but if, when we began our work in the early fall, looking forward to the days when we should see some of the results of our toil, we could have the assurance there would be those who would be ready to respond to the teaching and preaching of the Word, then it seems to me we should have an incentive to earnest and aggressive work. This is according to law, the law of God operating in the spiritual world just as truly as it operates in the natural world.

I

In the first place, then, *harvest-time is a time when laborers are in great demand.* This is true in the natural world. A comparatively few men may toil for weeks and months in preparing the land for the harvest, but when the time comes and the harvest is ripe, then extra help is needed and every one toils from early morning until late evening in order that the harvest may be gathered.

It is an ordinary thing for the farmers in the far West to advertise in the papers of our large cities, at certain seasons of the year, when the harvest is about ripe. Men

leave cities like Chicago and St. Louis, sometimes almost filling a train, because of the appeal which comes from the Far Western farmers for men to come and help gather in the harvest. Harvest-time in the natural world is the time when laborers are in great demand, and the same thing is true in the spiritual world.

When there are indications in a church or a community that it is time for the harvest to begin, every pastor knows perfectly well that the entire membership of the church ought to be enlisted in gathering in the harvest. Indeed it is one of the most serious times in the history of church life, and in some instances, at least, large harvests might be gathered if the people in the churches could only realize their opportunity. But if they are indifferent and careless or lazy, the harvest-time goes by and a comparatively small number are gathered in, when it would be just as easy to gather in a large number of souls.

Every man who has been engaged in evangelistic work knows this to be a fact. No matter if the preparation for the evangelistic service is well done and the meet-

ings are conducted in such a way as to win the approval and response of the people, unless the harvest is cared for after the evangelist goes away, that movement becomes a curse rather than a blessing.

Sometimes in our churches we find those who do not believe in evangelistic work and in almost every instance it is because of two things: either the individual is utterly devoid of real spiritual life, or he does not know the plan of God for the salvation of souls. There are those who are so prejudiced against anything in the nature of evangelistic work that they are utterly unwilling to give any of their time and strength to help in a time of harvest. What these people need more than anything else is to understand the plan of God, the method of reaching souls, and to realize that harvest-time in the spiritual world may be just as quiet and noiseless and natural as it is in the natural world.

Some years ago I was conducting some meetings in the City of Plainfield, New Jersey, and the pastor of the church said to me: "One of my men who is an officer in the church has told me very frankly that

he doesn't believe in evangelistic meetings, but, because he is an officer of the church, he is willing to attend the services, though, of course, he will not take any part in the work. He will not endeavor to get people to attend the meetings, he will not engage in personal work, and he feels that the meetings ought not to be held. He cannot see why I have invited you to leave your church and come here to help me. Now," he said, "what do you do with a man like that?"

"Well," I said, "in the first place, it would be very unwise to get cross with him. About the only suggestion I have is that all of us who know about this pray earnestly that during these days he may get the greatest blessing he ever had, and perhaps that may remove from his mind the prejudice which is there."

The meetings began on Sunday night. On Friday night of that week, while I was in the pastor's room, just before going out on the platform, some one knocked at the door. I opened it, and there stood a tall, rather dignified-looking man, who told me his name and asked if he might see me for a moment or two. I knew who he was, be-

cause the pastor had pointed him out to me. He was the officer who was prejudiced against evangelistic meetings. He came in and shut the door, and then I saw he was laboring under some emotion. When he could gain control of himself he said: "I did not believe in these meetings. I did not feel this was the way to do Christian work. Last night I did not attend the meeting. We have a boy twelve years of age who is the only child in our family and very naturally we think a great deal of him. He attended the meeting. He came back and came up to my study and putting his arm around my shoulder, he said, 'Father, tonight I accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour. Will you help me to be a Christian boy?'" And then in a voice that was choking with emotion, this dignified professor, for he was a professor in the college in the community, said to me: "Mr. Taylor, he is all we have in the world, and I shall never forget the thrill that came to me when I realized that my boy had found Christ as his Saviour and was actually wanting me to help him to be a Christian. I told him how glad I was and

we had a little season of prayer together. Now I realize I have been all wrong in my attitude toward these meetings, and I have come to ask your pardon. I want to tell the pastor also, for I am sorry for the attitude I have taken. I have received the greatest blessing I have ever had in my life. If there is anything I can do to help in these days, I want to do it."

I told him that I wanted him to be ready to do personal work at the close of every service, and he told me he would be glad to do it, and it was not long before that man was one of the most active and interested men in that movement.

If we could only help people to see that, after all, the greatest blessing that can come to a human soul is the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that that can come in a natural way without any sensation or excitement, in this way I believe we could remove from people's minds the prejudice which many have toward the idea of evangelistic or revival meetings. Here was a man who needed to be won to the cause and whose influence in the community was so great that he was already hurting the

work by the attitude which he had taken. When people saw that he had completely changed in his attitude, their minds were opened to the reception of the truth to which they would have been utterly closed before.

II

In the second place, *harvest-time is the time of tremendous exertion.* "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son, but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causes shame." We all know perfectly well how, in the busy days of the harvest, the farmers arise very early in the morning, toil all day long through the heat, and are willing to continue as long as the light lasts. It is a time when everybody must work, and work hard, and work quickly in order that the harvest may be gathered.

When the time comes in any church when it seems opportune to begin a series of evangelistic services, people ought to realize that extra effort should be put forth. Business engagements should be limited. All social engagements should be laid aside. Every one should concentrate upon the idea of

gathering in the harvest, and whenever this is done and people unselfishly devote themselves to the work of the kingdom, there is always a harvest in that church or community. It is a time of tremendous exertion, a time when we do things that we did not think we could do and when we sacrifice beyond the point which we had ever reached before.

A good many years ago, one of my friends told me that he was in the State of Vermont for a series of evangelistic meetings. It was in a small town where all of the churches united, and on the night when the meetings began, they had a regular blizzard. The snow piled up, the cold was intense, and it seemed to him, of course, as though the meeting would be a failure. There was a very small number of people gathered because many could not come on account of the storm. And so he said: "I preached a sermon entirely for Christians, and at the end of the sermon, I asked the people to express themselves as to what their desire for these days of evangelistic effort was. One after another stood and told what they hoped would come to pass.

Just as I was about to close the meeting an old lady arose and said, 'Mr. ——, I am a very old woman. I am very near the end of the journey, but tonight I walked six miles through the snow in order to be at this meeting. I live out in the country. I have two grandsons who are now young men. They are not in the church, and when their parents died and I had to take care of them, it was the earnest desire of their mother that these boys should come to know Christ as their Saviour. I have tried to lead them into the kingdom of God, but up to the present time I have failed. I felt when I heard these meetings were coming that here was the last opportunity, and I have been praying every day for these meetings. I shall walk back, I expect, through the snow tonight, but I shall not be back to the meetings again for I cannot make the journey. I want you to know that every night when you are preaching, there will be an old lady out in the country on her knees before God, pleading for victory and pleading earnestly that these two boys may be won to Christ. If I could know that these two boys had accepted

Christ as their Saviour, I would be willing to go home to heaven and feel that my work was done.' "

Mr. —— said that there was a remarkable wave of spiritual power that seemed to come over that meeting at that time, and on their knees people plead with God for the meetings and for the salvation of those two boys.

" The meetings went on," he continued; " the weather cleared and we were having a most remarkable time. I had almost forgotten about the old lady who came at the beginning of the meetings to plead for those boys. On the last night of the meetings, as I was pleading with people to accept Christ and just about to close the invitation because I thought everybody had come who intended to come, I made one more plea and then a young man, way over on the right side of the church, arose and came down the aisle. No sooner had he started than a man in the center of the house arose and came down, and I could see that it caused a sensation in the audience. I did not understand it until the pastor whispered to me, ' Those are the boys that

the old lady prayed for.' At the close of the meeting, when it seemed as if all was over, those two boys came into the kingdom and the dear old lady out in the country had the answer to her prayer."

Let us not lose sight of the fact, my friends, that it was not simply because this dear old lady lifted her heart to God in prayer, but let us remember that she was willing, at her age, and in the midst of a great storm, to walk all those miles to place her plea before the people and God. When we are ready to give of our time and strength, then I believe there will be a harvest in any community or church.

III

In the third place, *harvest is the time of great anxiety*. Everything must be done that can possibly be done, and done quickly. Farmers always scan the horizon to see what the weather is going to be. They know perfectly well harvest season is a time of great anxiety for them. Sometimes a storm may come and ruin the work of many months.

I believe this is true with the spiritual

harvest. There are souls in the congregation that are tremendously concerned lest the meetings shall close and friends or relatives shall not be converted. It is a time when people wait before God in all earnestness and sincerity. It is a time when people cannot sleep through the night because of their anxiety concerning their loved ones, and whenever this condition comes, I believe that there is sure to be a harvest.

In the early days of my ministerial experience, I used to go to a very small village in the State of New Jersey and preach occasionally in a Presbyterian church. The pastor was a very old gentleman. He had been in this church for over forty years, and he and his wife were the most beloved people for miles around in that country.

On one occasion, I went there and preached for a week in evangelistic services, and one night, near the end of the week, I was awakened in the middle of the night by hearing some one talking in the room above mine. I knew that the pastor and his wife occupied that room, and I was afraid lest some one was ill, but in the

quietness of the night, I heard a woman's voice and then I heard sentences like these: "Oh God, these meetings must not close before these boys come to know Christ. Thou knowest we have done all that we can do and now we want to lay the case before thee." And so on, for quite a while this dear old lady, wife of the pastor, was pleading for some of the young men in the village. Very naturally, I lifted my voice with hers in prayer and then gave myself to sleep.

The next morning at breakfast, nothing was said about the night that had been spent in prayer by that dear old lady, but I noticed that she looked very weary.

The meetings closed and the three young men for whom she had been pleading had not accepted Christ. I went back to my work in the City of Newark, and was there about a week when I received a telegram from the wife of the pastor asking me if I would not come back again for just one night. It did not seem to me wise to go back and hold a meeting for just one night after the meetings had closed, and besides this I had been very busy because I had

been away from my work, but remembering the night that this dear old lady had spent in prayer, I could not resist the invitation, so I wired back that I would certainly come.

I confess I went back there with a feeling that it was not the wisest thing to do, but when I went into the church that night, the church was filled just as it had been during the meetings, and when I went on the platform, I glanced around that audience to see if the three young men were there, for whom I knew this meeting was being held. I knew perfectly well that the only reason for my coming back was an earnest desire on the part of this old lady that these boys should have one more opportunity. To my great delight, I saw they were in the audience.

That evening the sermon was preached with those three young men in mind, and at the close of the service my heart leaped with joy when among others who came forward I saw these young men. When the service was over, I went to this old lady and said, "Well, that night of prayer counted," and she smiled as she said, "I

did not believe that I could possibly let go until these boys had come to know Christ."

Harvest-time is a time of great anxiety. During a series of meetings in my church in Brooklyn, one day, on the street, I met a member of the church who was greatly concerned for her son, for whom she had asked prayer. When she met me, her eyes were filled with tears, and all that she could say was, as she took me by the hand, "If he will only come, if he will only come!"

I said to her, "I believe he will come, and if he doesn't come now, ultimately that boy is going to be saved."

He was a married man with a family. He was moral and upright, all that a son ought to be, and yet that good mother would not be satisfied until he was in the kingdom. Before the close of the meetings, she had the joy of seeing that boy confessing Christ, and not only that, but his own son came with him and they were received into the church at the same time. Anxiety like that which I have indicated is always to be found at a time of real harvest, and it always has its answer in the salvation of souls.

IV

In conclusion, *harvest-time is a time of gladness.* "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

There are many times in the history of church life that are filled with the spirit of gladness, but the most joyous moment in the life of any church is not when the church has finished its new building and the church is being dedicated to the glory of God—that is indeed a time of great rejoicing and people's hearts are glad, but it is not the supreme moment of joy in a church's life. Nor is it the time when the mortgage is being paid off, and the congregation gathers, and the mortgage is burned, and the people stand and sing, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." That is indeed again a time of great rejoicing, but it is not the supreme time. The time of

great joy in the history of any church comes when some Sunday morning, usually at the close of a series of evangelistic services, the pastor is welcoming scores of boys and girls, men and women who have recently found Christ as their Saviour. As that large group of people stand on a Sunday morning before the pulpit for the first time being received into the fellowship of a Christian church, the entire congregation is thrilled as it never is at any other time in the history of that church, and the eyes of many in the congregation are moist and the hearts are leaping for joy because of the answer to prayers and the result of earnest toil on the part of many who have been interested in the harvest. This is the time of great joy in the natural world and it is a time of great joy in the spiritual world.

Some years ago I visited a man whose wife had been very anxious about him for a long time, and the time had come when she believed that he was near the kingdom, and so, at her invitation, I went to see him. At the close of the interview that evening, he had received Christ as his

Saviour and I said to him, "Now, when would you like to be baptized?" He said to me, "I do not want to be baptized for several weeks," and I was just a bit afraid that perhaps he was going to put that off and, in the meantime, he might go back on the confession which he had made that night. On the other hand, I knew he was a traveling man and that, perhaps, he could not be present for several weeks. But he said to me: "No, it is not a matter of my being away, but I have a dear old mother living up in the country who has prayed for me ever since I was born, and the one ambition of her life has been to see her boy in the church. I do not want to be baptized until she can be present."

"Well, then," I said to him, "we will arrange it in that way."

Several weeks later he came to me and said, "I would like to be baptized on Sunday morning because mother is going to be here," and so on Sunday morning I had the privilege of burying that man in the waters of baptism. It was a most joyous occasion for him, and I shall never forget it as long as I live. As I looked out from the bap-

tistery on the congregation, I saw this dear old white-haired lady, her eyes glistening with tears and the light of heaven on her face as she saw the answer to her prayers, her son buried in the waters of baptism. Surely it was a time of great gladness in her heart and also in the pastor's heart.

It is a time of great gladness not only because of the joy which comes into the lives of those who have found their Saviour, but it is a time of great joy because of the homes that are reunited, because of lives that are made over, because of the answer to prayers, long deferred, because it is the release of anxiety concerning those for whom we have been laboring; and, it is a time of great joy and gladness in the eternal world.

Did not our Saviour say that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God because of one sinner who has turned from his way?

X

LIFE OR DEATH

A Sermon to Men

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.

—*Deut. 30: 19.*

LIFE OR DEATH

A Sermon to Men

THE last words of our friends are always the most effective. The boy who has been disobedient to all authority of mother and father listens attentively to the words of counsel, advice, or request as they fall from the lips of the dying parent and resolves that now he will obey, no matter what the cost of obedience may be.

These are the last words of one of the greatest men the world has ever known. Moses was a great man. He was great as a statesman and as a law-giver. So great, indeed, that, after four thousand years, we find the jurisprudence of the world based upon his words. He was not only great as a statesman and law-giver, but he was a wonderful leader of men. Men like Alexander, Napoleon, and Grant have marshaled and controlled for a few years an army of men, but Moses organized and controlled an army numbering millions, and so completely was he master of the situation that in forty

years there was never any need of a change of commanders.

And now he is about to give up the command. He has received word from the Lord that he is to come home to heaven and receive his reward. As the evening shadows gather about his life, he rehearses before the people the story of God's dealings with them. He tells them the story of their deliverance from Egypt, he sets before them their unbelief and their failure to respond to the will of Jehovah. He reminds them that whenever they have obeyed God he has blessed them; and whenever they have disobeyed he has punished them. "Now," he says, "I am about to leave you, another is to take my place, and he will guide you into the promised land." Then, mentioning six blessings and six curses, he says: "If ye obey God, these blessings will be yours, but if ye disobey, these six curses will come upon you." And then, with great solemnity, he urges upon them the duty of choosing that which will bring the blessing of God. "The word is very nigh unto thee . . . that thou mayest do it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that

I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life that both thou and thy seed may live."

It is a solemn moment in the life of any man when he stands facing the question of life and death. It is a solemn moment for men here today, because whatever else may be the outcome of this meeting I intend to set before you life and death, the blessing and the cursing; so that if in the days to come we shall face each other at the judgment-seat of Christ I shall be able to say that on one occasion at least you came face to face with the claims of God upon your life. I want to be able in that day to say that, in no unmistakable terms, I set before you the reasons why you should choose life instead of death, the blessing instead of the curse. And when I urge you to choose life, let me say that by choosing life I mean that you should choose Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord. To choose life is to choose Christ, and to choose Christ is to find life. He is the Way and the Truth and the Life, and until men know him they do not know the full meaning of the word life. "I am come," said he, "that

they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

There are many reasons why a man should choose life, but out of them all I want to suggest just four, any one of which, as it seems to me, ought to be enough to lead a man to Christ.

I

Every man ought to choose Christ because *all men need Christ*. In every meeting like this there are men, who, stirred by the influence of the service, go out firmly resolving to live a different life. They agree with the speaker, they believe the story of the gospel, and they have a desire for a better life. And certainly no one should find fault with a man who desires a better life. But suppose some man goes out today and, like many others, he decides that hereafter he will live a clean life. Suppose, for the moment, that this man lives to be many years older than he is today, and in all that time he never commits another sin. This is an impossible thing, of course, but for the moment let us suppose such a case. Now would that man

be saved? Would he, because of these years of righteousness, be entitled to an entrance into the heavenly world? No! But, you say, why not? For fifty years of clean living is not a man entitled to heaven? And, again, I answer, No. In the first place, because no man will ever be saved because of what he has done, but for that which Christ has done for him; and, in the second place, he cannot be saved, for the reason that he has not been cleansed from the sins already committed. The sins of all the years up to this time are still with him. Day after day and year after year he has been piling them up until they are mountainous, and nothing that he can do will ever atone for them. The sins of thought and deed, as well as the sin of rebellion to God's will, have never been purged from his life, and until the blood of Jesus Christ rolls over his soul he will not be entitled to an entrance into the heavenly world. If by acts of righteousness, if by any amount of pure living we can be saved, then Calvary is a farce and the Christ was crucified in vain.

No, the Scriptures are right, "All have

sinned and come short of the glory of God," "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission," and the young man should choose Christ that he may be cleansed from sin. Not only does he need Christ to get rid of the sin already in his life, but to keep him from the possibility of failure after he has been cleansed. Many a man is afraid to stand up and acknowledge Christ as his Saviour because he fears that he will sin again within twenty-four hours and bring reproach upon his Lord. But Christ not only saves us, but keeps us, and those who put their trust in him are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

But there is another reason why you need Jesus Christ, and that is because you never can fulfil the purpose for which you were created until you have him in your life.

No man is ever a complete man until he is a Christian man. When God made man he made him foursquare. He gave him a physical side of his nature and an intellectual and a social side of his nature; but he did not stop there, for he crowned the man

with spiritual life, and this was meant to dominate the whole man. There are many three-sided men in the world today. They look all right in the eyes of men, but in the eyes of the Lord they are sadly deficient. A man may develop his body until he has the strength of a Sandow; he may cultivate the social side of his life until he becomes a veritable Beau Brummel; and he may educate his mind until he becames a genius; but if he has only these, he is a failure and of all men most miserable. Not until he has been touched by the Spirit of God and has flowing through his life the life of Christ does he became a complete man.

Some years ago, in a little town in the West, a crowd of men were gathered about a store window. A large American eagle was in the window. Fastened to one of its feet was a chain and this was secured to a ring in the floor of the window. The bird was absolutely indifferent to its condition. It was a splendid picture of fallen greatness. While the men were looking at the bird, a tall young mountaineer elbowed his way through the crowd, and, after looking

for a moment, walked into the store and asked the proprietor how much he wanted for the bird. The man said two dollars. The young man took some money out of his pocket and paid for the bird, and the storekeeper unfastened the chain and handed the eagle to him. He carried the great bird down the street, followed by the crowd. Coming to a large billboard fence with a ladder against it, he climbed the ladder and placed the eagle upon the top of the fence. Unfastening the chain he came down. The bird remained motionless for a moment, then noting that he seemed to have more freedom than usual, he opened his eyes and glanced around. Then, as if to be sure of his power, he stretched out one great wing and then another, and then with a hoarse scream he soared up toward the sun, while the crowd sent up a cheer. "I used to see that bird way up on the mountain where I tended sheep," said the young man, "and when I saw him chained down in that store window I could not stand it. He belongs up above and was never meant to be in such a place." Whether this story is true in every particular or not I

do not know, but I do know that God intended that men should live in fellowship with him, and when he saw us down here chained by sin, unable to realize the purpose for which we were created, he sent Jesus Christ to free us, and the cross of Calvary is the price of our freedom. And if we will but accept him we may live above the clouds of this world in fellowship with God.

II

The second reason why you should choose Christ is because *it is a manly thing to do.*

I have said that a man is never a complete man until he is a Christian man, and I want to emphasize this. There was a day when, if a young man became a Christian, he was thought to be a milk-and-water sort of a fellow who had none of the elements of manhood. But that day has gone forever. Men are beginning to realize that it takes all there is of a man to be a Christian. The manliest men this country has produced have been Christian men, and the man who thinks that a man loses any of his manliness by surrendering his life to Jesus Christ has

a great deal to learn about real manhood. There came a time in the life of James A. Garfield when, at the top of Mt. Holyoke, with some fellow students, he decided to camp there all night. When the hour for retiring came, young Garfield took a New Testament out of his pocket and said, "Fellows, I always read a chapter out of this book and offer prayer before I go to bed, and with your permission I will read aloud and offer prayer." Was he any the less a man for that action? When Abraham Lincoln went to Henry Ward Beecher one night during the Civil War and spent the night on his knees with Mr. Beecher, asking God to save the country, did he lose any of his manhood? When William E. Gladstone sat down by the side of a sick crossing-sweeper in one of the lowest hovels in London and read the Scriptures and prayed with him, was he any the less a man? I do not need to press the question; every man here knows that these men were manly men, and their relation to God only puts them upon a higher plane in our estimation. The fact of the matter is that the more manhood a man possesses the

more likely he is to be a Christian man. I have had many excuses offered me by young men for not becoming followers of Christ, but I have never had but one man give what I should call a reason.

I was conducting a series of meetings in a well-known university some years ago and when the last night of the meetings came the hall was filled to overflowing. A number of the students had come out for Christ during the meetings, but there were still a number who were holding back. One of the men who attended the last meeting was a prominent football man, and, in fact, one of the leading men of the college. At the close of the service, his chum, who sat beside him, stood up and publicly accepted Christ, together with a number of others. After the meeting was over I met this football man, and some others, in a classroom. All of the men in the room came out for Christ but this one. When I came to him I saw that he was as white as marble. He was trembling from head to foot, and I knew that he was having a great struggle. Taking him by the hand, I said to him, "Will you take Jesus Christ as

your Saviour and follow him?" He hesitated a moment and then he said, "I'm not man enough." And he told the truth. It takes all there is of a man to be a Christian, and there are many today who if they should tell the real truth would have to say, "The only reason why I am not a Christian is because I am not man enough."

III

Another reason why every man should choose Christ is found in the fact that *the service of Christ affords an opportunity for real heroism.*

We admire the courage of the man who, when the call comes for volunteers, leaves his home and goes forth to face the bullets of the enemy of his country. And we should admire this courage. But let us not forget that moral courage is far superior to physical courage. Men who will risk their lives for the sake of others sometimes have no courage at all in moral matters.

Here is a young man and he has just left his home. He is sad-faced and heavy-hearted. The doctor has just told him that unless the young wife, whom he adores, can

have a change of climate and some of the luxuries which he has mentioned, she cannot get well. He loves her with all his soul and would be willing at any moment to lay down life itself for her sake. But here is a condition which he cannot help. His salary will not permit following the doctor's orders. He enters the office and opens the safe and takes out the money for the day's business. He is all alone in the office. While he is counting the money there comes across his mind a suggestion which causes the hot blood to rush to his temples: "Why not take some of this money? It will never be missed. You have nothing to risk for you can put it back at your leisure." And then all of the forces of the infernal world begin their awful work. On the one side is the wife whom he loves and the possibility of health and strength. On the other is the fact that years ago he promised to follow Jesus Christ. The battle rages for a few moments, when, with a cry of agony he flings himself upon his knees: "O God, help me now!" And a moment after he stands up, and the victory is won. That man is a hero! Napoleon in all of his

marvelous conquests never won a victory as great as that. Yes, the man who lives an out-and-out life of Christ will have battles, and many of them, and this alone ought to appeal to young men, for what are we here for, if not to fight battles? And what sort of a man is that who wants an easy time of it in this world? Oh for men, real dead-in-earnest men. Men who will consecrate their lives to the service of Jesus Christ and then, to use the words of Doctor Speer, "Live with a vengeance and die with a snap."

IV

And now, last of all, and perhaps most important of all, I urge you to choose Christ because *in so doing you obtain eternal life.*

"There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." You ought to choose Christ because you need him to cleanse you from past sin, to keep you from present and future sin, to enable you to fulfil the object of your creation, because you are doing the manly thing when you do this and you find an opportunity to develop a heroic char-

acter; but if none of these reasons move you, then let me urge you to choose Christ for the sake of your eternal destiny. You may not think you need Christ now, but the day will come when you will need him more than you have ever needed anything in this world.

While traveling upon the Sound steamers I used to notice that each boat carried two splendid-looking anchors. They were very nice to look at, but I could not see the reason for having them on board. We used to tie up at the wharf in Fall River, and when we came to New York I noticed that they did the same thing there. And this led me to think that these anchors were carried merely for ornament. But one morning I was awakened by the blowing of whistles and the ringing of bells, and I went on deck and found that we were in the midst of a dense fog. So thick was it that we could hardly see from one end of the vessel to the other. Just as I arrived on deck I saw the sailors lowering one of the anchors. It went down into the water with a splash, and the vessel swung round and we were fast. After a while the fog lifted

and then I learned the value of an anchor, for right ahead of us was another Sound steamer and, had we gone on our way we must have crashed into her with dreadful results. The anchor on that steamer saved our lives. And, my friends, when the fogs begin to gather and the things of this world fade from your view, the one thing that will prove valuable will be your hope in Jesus Christ. And if you do not possess this, nothing but disaster and ruin await you.

I am acquainted with a man who is an engineer on one of the railroads running out of New York City. Some years ago this man, who is an earnest Christian, was addressing a meeting of men, a large number of whom were employees of the railroad. As he closed his address he said: "I cannot begin to tell you what Jesus Christ is to me. He has given me a hope that is very precious. Some years ago," he said, "every night as I neared the end of my run I would look up to the top of a hill where stood a little cottage; and as we rushed down through the cut I would pull open the whistle and let out a blast, and

then an old lady would come to the door of the cottage and wave her hand to me. And as we shot into the tunnel she would go into the house and say to her husband, 'Thank God, father, Bennie is safe home tonight.' But the day came when we carried mother out and laid her to rest. Then, night after night, when I pulled the whistle, an old man would come to the door and wave his hand to me, and I could almost hear him say, as he entered the house, 'Thank God, Bennie is safe home tonight.' But now," said the engineer, "they are both gone, and although I look up many times I do not see either of the dear ones to welcome me home. But some day, when I have pulled the whistle for the last time, and the work of this world is over, I shall come to the pearly gates, and I am sure that as I draw near I shall see an old lady waiting at the entrance, with an old gentleman; and, as I enter I shall see my dear old mother turn to father and say, 'Thank God, father, Bennie is safe home at last.'"

Oh, men, if for no other reason than this, that it will mean the reunion of loved ones, the answer to the prayers of those whom

we have loved long since and lost awhile, I urge you to choose Christ.

May God help you now to give free play to the noblest impulses of your life. Choose, choose now, and choose Christ.

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

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